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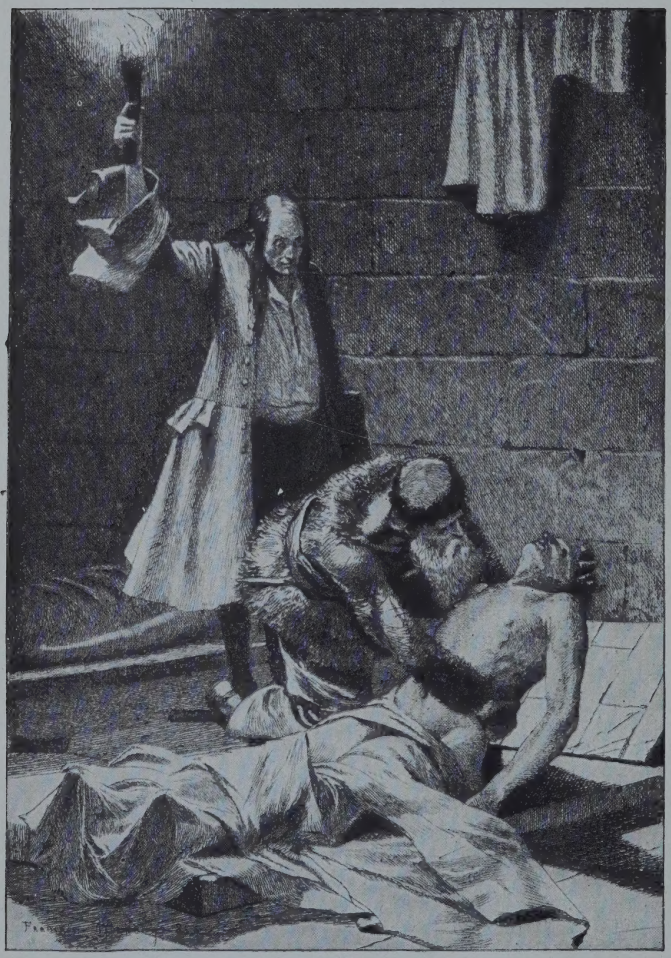

"His lamp lit up a strange and hideous scene,—a short, stout man, dressed from head to foot in the skins of wild beasts,—at the feet of Gill Stadt's corpse."

Hans of Iceland. *Page* 49.

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THE WORKS

OF

VICTOR HUGO

VOLUME IV

LES MISÉRABLES

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JEAN VALJEAN

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CONTENTS

Vol. V.

JEAN VALJEAN

BOOK I.—WAR WITHIN FOUR WALLS.

Chapter		Page
I.	The Charybdis of the Faubourg St. Antoine and the Scylla of the Faubourg du Temple	1
II.	What can one do in the Abyss, but talk?	9
III.	Lights and Shadows	13
IV.	Five Less and one More	15
V.	The View from the Top of a Barricade	22
VI.	Marius Haggard, Javert laconic	26
VII.	The Situation becomes worse	26
VIII.	The Artillery-men set to work in earnest	33
IX.	The Poacher's Skill, and the unerring shot which influenced the sentence in 1796	36
X.	Dawn	38
XI.	The Shot which misses Nothing and kills Nobody	42
XII.	Disorder the Partisan of Order	43
XIII.	Passing Gleams	47
XIV.	Where we read the Name of the Mistress of Enjolras	49
XV.	Gavroche outside	51
XVI.	How a Brother becomes a Father	55
XVII.	Mortuus Pater Filium Moriturum expectat	64
XVIII.	The Vulture becomes the Victim	66
XIX.	The Vengeance of Jean Valjean	71
XX.	The Dead are right and the Living are not wrong	74
XXI.	The Heroes	84
XXII.	Step by Step	88
XXIII.	Orestes fasting and Pylades drunk	92
XXIV.	Prisoner!	96

BOOK II.—THE BOWELS OF LEVIATHAN.

Chapter		Page
I.	The Earth impoverished by the Sea	99
II.	Ancient History of the Sewer	103
III.	Bruneseau	107
IV.	Unknown Details	111
V.	Present Progress	115
VI.	Future Progress	116

BOOK III.—MUD, BUT SOUL.

I.	The Sewer and its Surprises	122
II.	Explanation	129
III.	The Man who made off	131
IV.	He too bears his Cross	136
V.	Sand, like Woman, may be so fine as to be Perfidious	140
VI.	The Break	145
VII.	Wrecked in Sight of Port	147
VIII.	The torn Coat-tail	150
IX.	Marius appears dead to an Expert	156
X.	Return of the Son prodigal of his Life	160
XI.	A Shock to the Absolute	163
XII.	The Grandfather	165

BOOK IV.—JAVERT DERAILED.

I.	Javert off the track	171

BOOK V.—GRANDSON AND GRANDFATHER.

I.	In which the tree with the Zinc Plaster appears again	185
II.	Marius, quitting civil War, prepares for domestic War	189
III.	Marius attacks	194
IV.	Mlle. Gillenormand ceases to think it a bad thing that M. Fauchelevent should come in with Something under his Arm	197
V.	Better place your Money in a Forest than with a Notary	203

Chapter		Page
VI.	The two old Men, each in his way, do all they can to make Cosette happy	205
VII.	The Effects of Dreams mingled with Happiness	214
VIII.	Two Men impossible to discover	217

BOOK VI.— THE SLEEPLESS NIGHT.

I.	February 16, 1833	222
II.	Jean Valjean still has his Arm in a Sling	232
III.	The Inseparable	242
IV.	Immortale Jecur	245

BOOK VII.— THE LAST DROP IN THE CUP.

I.	The seventh Circle and the eighth Heaven	250
II.	Obscurities which a Revelation contains	269

BOOK VIII.— THE TWILIGHT DECLINE.

I.	The Ground-floor Room	278
II.	Another backward Step	283
III.	They remember the Garden in the Rue Plumet	286
IV.	Attraction and Extinction	291

BOOK IX.— SUPREME DARKNESS, SUPREME DAWN.

I.	Pity the Unhappy, but be indulgent to the Happy	294
II.	The last Flickerings of the Lamp without Oil	296
III.	A pen is too heavy for him who lifted Fauchelevent's cart	299
IV.	A Bottle of Ink which only Whitens	302
V.	A Night behind which is Day	322
VI.	The Grass hides, and the Rain effaces	334

JEAN VALJEAN

BOOK I

WAR WITHIN FOUR WALLS

CHAPTER I

THE CHARYBDIS OF THE FAUBOURG ST. ANTOINE AND THE SCYLLA OF THE FAUBOURG DU TEMPLE

THE two most memorable barricades which the observer of social diseases can mention do not belong to the period in which the action of this book is laid. These two barricades, both symbols, under different aspects, of a terrible situation, rose from the earth during the fatal insurrection of June, 1848,— the greatest street-war known to history.

It sometimes happens that the rabble, that great and desperate mass, even contrary to principles, even contrary to liberty, equality, and fraternity, even contrary to the universal vote, to the government of all by all, protests, from the depths of its agony, its discouragement, its deprivations, its fevers, its distresses, its miasmas, its ignorance, and its darkness, and the populace offers battle to the people.

Beggars attack the common right; ochlocracy rises in revolt against demos.

Those are mournful days; for there is always a certain amount of right even in this mania, there is suicide in this duel, and those words, intended to be insults,— such as beggars, rabble, ochlocracy, the populace,— prove alas! rather the fault of those who reign than the fault of those who suffer; rather the fault of the privileged than the fault of the disinherited.

For our own part, we never pronounce those words without pain and without respect; for when philosophy fathoms the facts to which they correspond, it often finds much grandeur by the side of misery. Athens was an ochlocracy; beggars made Holland; the populace more than once saved Rome; and the rabble followed Jesus Christ. There is no thinker who has not at times contemplated the magnificence below.

Saint Jerome was doubtless thinking of this rabble, of all these poor people, all these vagabonds, and all the wretches whence the apostles and martyrs sprang, when he uttered the mysterious words: *Fæ urbis, lex orbis.*

The exasperations of this mob, which suffers and which bleeds; its mistaken violence directed against the principles which are its life; its assaults upon the right,— are popular revolutionary measures, and must be repressed. The honest man devotes himself to the work, and out of his very love for this mob, combats it. But how excusable he finds it, while he resists it! How he venerates it, even while he opposes it! This is one of those rare moments, when a man, while doing his duty, feels something that disconcerts him and almost dissuades him from going further. He persists, for he must; but conscience, though satisfied, is sad, and the accomplishment of duty is complicated by a heavy heart.

June, 1848, was, let us hasten to say, an exceptional fact, and almost impossible to classify in the philosophy of history. All the words we have just uttered must be laid aside when we come to deal with this extraordinary riot, in which we are conscious of the holy anxiety of labour claiming its rights. It had to be combated; this was a duty, for it attacked the

republic. But in reality, what was June, 1848? A revolt of the people against itself.

Where the subject is not lost sight of, there is no digression; hence we may be permitted to concentrate the reader's attention momentarily upon the two absolutely unique barricades to which we have alluded, and which characterized that insurrection.

The one blocked the entrance to the Faubourg St. Antoine; the other defended the approach to the Faubourg du Temple. Those before whom these two frightful masterpieces of civil war were raised in the bright blue sky of June will never forget them.

The St. Antoine barricade was monstrous; it was three stories high and seven hundred feet in width. It barred from one corner to the other the vast mouth of the Faubourg, that is to say, three streets; ravined, slashed, serrated, cut up, surmounted by an immense jagged line, supported by heaps which were themselves bastions, pushing out capes here and there, and powerfully reinforced by the two great promontories of the houses of the Faubourg, it rose like a Cyclopean embankment at the end of the fearful square which had seen July 14. There were nineteen barricades erected in the streets behind this mother barricade. Merely by looking at it, you felt the immense agonizing suffering in the faubourg which had reached that extreme point where misery desires to become a catastrophe. Of what was this barricade made? Of the ruins of three six-story houses demolished expressly, say some. Of the prodigy of all anger, say others. It possessed the lamentable aspect of all the structures of hatred,—ruin. You might ask: "Who built this?" and you might also ask, "Who destroyed this?" It was the improvisation of the ebullition. Here! Take that door! that grating! that awning! that chimney! that broken stove! that cracked stewpan! Give us anything! throw everything in! push, roll, pick, dismantle, overthrow and pull down everything. It was a collaboration of paving-stones, beams, iron bars, planks, broken windows, scraps, unseated chairs, cabbage-stalks, rags,

tatters, and curses. It was great and it was little. It was the abyss parodied in the public square by formless chaos. It was the mass side by side with the atom,— a bit of crumbling wall and a broken pipkin; a menacing fraternization of all fragments, into which Sisyphus had cast his rock and Job his potsherd. Altogether, it was terrible. It was the acropolis of the barefooted. Overturned carts studded the slope; an immense wain spread out across it, its axletree pointing to the sky, and looked like a scar on that tumultuous façade; an omnibus, gayly hoisted by main strength to the very top of the pile, as if the architects of this savage edifice had wished to add mockery to the horror, offered its bare pole to the horses of the air. This gigantic mound, the alluvium of the riot, represented to the mind an Ossa upon Pelion of all revolutions,—'93 upon '89, the 9th Thermidor upon the 10th August, the 18th Brumaire upon January 21, Vendemiaire upon Prairial, 1848 upon 1830. The place was worth the trouble, and this barricade was worthy to appear upon the very spot whence the Bastille had disappeared. If the ocean made dykes, it would build them in this way. The fury of the flood was stamped on this shapeless mass. What flood? The people. You fancied that you saw riot petrified. You heard the huge dark bees of violent progress humming about this barricade as if they had their hive there. Was it a thicket? Was it a Bacchanalian feast? Was it a fortress? Vertigo seemed to have built it with the flapping of its wings. There was somewhat of the sewer in that redoubt, and something Olympian in that confusion. You saw there pell-mell, full of desperation, gables of roofs, pieces of garret walls with their flowered paper, window-frames with all their panes, planted in the mass awaiting the cannon, pulled down mantelpieces, chests of drawers, tablets, benches, a howling topsy-turvy, and those thousand wretched things cast away even by the beggar, which contain at once fury and nothingness. It may be said that it was the rags of a people,— rags of wood, of iron, of bronze, of stone; that the Faubourg St. Antoine had swept them out at its door with a gigantic flour-

ish of the broom, making a barricade of its misery. Logs resembling executioners' blocks, broken chains, anvil frames of the shape of gallows, horizontal wheels emerging from the rubbish-heap produced on this edifice of anarchy a sombre image of the tortures suffered by the people of old. The St. Antoine barricade made a weapon of everything; all that civil war can throw at the head of society came from it; it was not a fight, but a paroxysm; the muskets which defended this redoubt, among which were several blunderbusses, discharged bits of crockery, bones, coat-buttons, and even the casters of night-stands,— dangerous missiles, being made of brass. This barricade was furious; it hurled an indescribable clamour into the clouds. At certain moments, when challenging the army, it was covered with a crowd and a tempest; a mob of flaming heads crowned it; it swarmed like an ant-hill; it had a prickly crest of guns, sabres, sticks, axes, pikes, and bayonets; a mighty red flag fluttered upon it in the breeze; cries of command, songs of attack, the rolling of the drum, the sobs of women, and the sardonic laughter of men dying of starvation were heard there. It was immeasurable and living; and the crackling of thunder issued from it as from the back of an electric animal. The spirit of revolution covered with its cloud this summit, where that voice of the people which resembles the voice of God, rumbled; a strange majesty arose from this Titanic basketful of rubbish. It was a dung-heap, and it was Sinai.

As we said above, it attacked in the name of the revolution, what? The revolution. It — this barricade, an accident, disorder, misunderstanding, the unknown — had facing it the Constituent Assembly, the sovereignty of the people, universal suffrage, the nation, the republic; and it was the "Carmagnole" defying the "Marseillaise."

It was a mad but heroic challenge, for this old Faubourg is a hero.

The Faubourg and its redoubt supported each other. The Faubourg formed the epaulement of the redoubt, and the redoubt rested upon the Faubourg. The vast barricade was

like a cliff against which the strategy of generals who had fought in Africa was broken. Its caverns, its excrescences, its warts, its humps, grimaced, if we may employ the expression, and grinned behind the smoke. The grape-shot vanished in the shapeless heap; shells buried themselves in it, were swallowed up, engulfed; cannon-balls only succeeded in making holes in it (what use is it to bombard chaos?); and regiments, accustomed to the sternest visions of war, gazed with anxious eye at this sort of redoubt,— a wild beast in its boar-like bristling, and a mountain in its enormity.

A quarter of a league farther on, at the corner of the Rue du Temple, which opens into the boulevard near the Château d'Eau, if you boldly advanced your head beyond the point formed by the front of Dallemagne's shop, you could see in the distance, across the canal, and at the highest point of the hilly street leading to Belleville, a strange wall rising to the second-floor of the houses,— a sort of connecting link between the houses on the right and those on the left, as if the street had folded back its highest wall in order to close itself up abruptly. This wall was built of paving-stones. It was straight, correct, cold, perpendicular, levelled with the plumb-line and the square. Of course, there was no cement; but, as in some Roman walls, this in no way disturbed its rigid architecture.

From its height, its thickness could be guessed. The entablature was mathematically parallel with the base. At regular distances almost invisible loopholes, resembling black threads, could be distinguished in the gray wall, separated from each other by equal intervals. The street was deserted as far as the eye could reach. All the windows and doors were closed. In the background rose this barrier, which converted the street into a blind alley; it was a motionless and tranquil wall; — no one was seen, nothing was heard; not a cry, nor a sound, nor a breath. It was a sepulchre.

The dazzling June sun inundated this terrible thing with light.

It was the barricade of the Faubourg du Temple.

So soon as you reached the ground and perceived it, it was impossible, even for the boldest, not to become thoughtful in the presence of this mysterious apparition. It was adjusted, clamped, imbricated, rectilinear, symmetrical, and funereal. Science and darkness were both there. You felt that the chief of this barricade was a geometrician or a spectre. As you gazed, you spoke in a whisper.

From time to time, if any one, private, officer, or representative of the people, ventured to cross the solitary road, a low, shrill whistle was heard, and the passer-by fell wounded or dead, or, if he escaped, a bullet, perhaps a shell, buried itself in some shutter, in the crevice between two blocks of stone, or in the stucco of some wall. The men on the barricade had made two small cannon out of two bits of gas-pipe, stopped up at one end with tow and clay. There was no useless expenditure of gunpowder. Nearly every shot told. There were a few corpses here and there, and pools of blood on the pavement. I remember a white butterfly that fluttered up and down the street. Summer does not abdicate.

All the gate-ways in the vicinity were crowded with wounded. You felt in this street that you were covered by some one whom you could not see, and you understood that the whole street was under the marksman's aim.

The soldiers of the attacking column, massed behind the sort of sloping ridge which the canal-bridge forms at the entrance to the Faubourg du Temple, gravely and thoughtfully watched this mournful redoubt, this immobility, this impassiveness, from which death issued. Some crawled on their stomachs to the top of the arch of the bridge, taking care not to let their shakos pass beyond it. Brave Colonel Monteynard admired this barricade with a shudder. "How it is built!" he said to a Representative. "Not a single paving-stone projects beyond the other. It is like a dainty bit of china." At this moment a bullet smashed the cross on his breast, and he fell.

"Cowards!" shouted the troops. "Why do they not show themselves? They dare not! They hide!" The barricade

of the Faubourg du Temple, defended by eighty men, attacked by ten thousand, held out for three days. On the fourth day the troops acted as at Zaatcha and Constantine,—they broke through houses, passed along roofs, and the barricade was taken. Not one of the eighty cowards dreamed of flight; all were killed except Barthélemy, their chief, of whom we shall speak presently.

The barricade of St. Antoine was the tumult of the thunder; the barricade of the Temple was the silence. There was between the two barricades the same difference as exists between the formidable and the sinister. The one seemed a maw, the other a mask.

Admitting that the gigantic and dark insurrection of June was composed of a fury and an enigma, the dragon was seen in the first barricade, and the sphinx behind the second.

These two fortresses were built by two men, Cournet and Barthélemy. Cournet made the St. Antoine barricade; Barthélemy the Temple barricade. Each was the image of the man who built it. Cournet was a man of tall stature; he had broad shoulders, a red face, a smashing fist, a brave heart, a loyal soul, a sincere and terrible eye. He was intrepid, energetic, irascible, and stormy; the most cordial of men, and the most terrible of combatants. War, contest, strife, were the very air he breathed, and put him in a good humour. He had been an officer in the navy, and from his gestures and his voice you divined that he issued from the ocean and came from the tempest; he continued the hurricane in battle. Omitting the genius, there was in Cournet something of Danton, as, omitting the divinity, there was in Danton something of Hercules.

Barthélemy, thin, weak, pale, and taciturn, was a sort of tragic street-arab, who, having had his ears boxed by a policeman, watched for him, waited for him, and killed him, and at the age of seventeen was sent to the galleys. He came out and built this barricade.

At a later date, when both were exiles in London, Barthélemy killed Cournet. It was a melancholy duel. Some time

after that, Barthélemy, caught in the cog-wheels of one of those mysterious adventures in which passion is mingled,— catastrophes in which French justice sees extenuating circumstances, and English justice sees only death,— was hanged. The gloomy social edifice is so built that, owing to material destitution and moral darkness, this wretched being, who had an intellect, certainly firm and possibly great, began with the galleys in France and ended with the gibbet in England. Barthélemy, on these occasions, hoisted only one flag,— the black flag.

CHAPTER II

WHAT CAN ONE DO IN THE ABYSS, BUT TALK?

SIXTEEN years count in the subterranean education of revolt, and June, 1848, knew a great deal more than June, 1832. Hence the barricade in the Rue de la Chanvrerie was only a sketch and an embryo when compared with the two colossal barricades which we have just described; but for the period, it was formidable.

The insurgents, under the eye of Enjolras, for Marius no longer looked after anything, had turned the night to good account. The barricade had not only been repaired, but increased. It had been raised two feet. Iron bars planted in the paving-stones resembled lances in rest. All sorts of rubbish, brought and added from all sides, complicated the external confusion. The redoubt had been cleverly converted into a wall inside and a thicket outside.

The staircase of paving-stones, which allowed the top of the barricade to be reached like the wall of a citadel, was restored. The barricade was put in order, the tap-room was cleared out, the kitchen converted into an infirmary, the wounds were dressed, the powder scattered about the tables and floor was collected, bullets were cast, cartridges manufactured, lint

scraped, the fallen arms re-distributed, the interior of the redoubt cleaned, the rubbish swept up, the corpses removed. The dead were laid in a heap, in Mondétour Lane, of which the insurgents were still masters. The pavement remained for a long time red at that spot. Among the dead were four suburban National Guards. Enjolras ordered their uniforms to be laid on one side.

Enjolras had advised two hours' sleep. Advice from him was an order. Still, only three or four took advantage of it.

Feuilly employed these two hours in engraving this inscription on the wall, facing the wine-shop: —

"LONG LIVE THE NATIONS!"

These four words, carved in the stone with a nail, could still be read on this wall in 1848.

The three women took advantage of the respite of night to disappear entirely, which allowed the insurgents to breathe more freely. They contrived to find refuge in some neighbouring house.

Most of the wounded could and would still fight. There were, on a pile of mattresses and trusses of straw laid in the kitchen converted into an infirmary, five men seriously wounded, of whom two were Municipal Guards. The wounds of the latter were dressed first.

No one remained in the ground-floor room, save Mabœuf under his black cerecloth, and Javert fastened to the post.

"This is the charnel-house," said Enjolras.

In the interior of this room, which was dimly lighted by a solitary candle at the far end, the mortuary table being behind the post like a horizontal bar, a sort of large vague cross resulted from Javert standing and Mabœuf lying down.

Although the pole of the omnibus was mutilated by the bullets, sufficient remained for a flag to be attached to it. Enjolras, who possessed that quality of a chief which consists in always doing what he said, fastened to it the bullet-pierced and blood-stained coat of the murdered old man.

No meal was possible, for there was neither bread nor meat. The fifty men, during the sixteen hours they had stood at the barricade, speedily exhausted the scanty provisions of the inn. At a given moment, every barricade that holds out inevitably becomes the raft of the Medusa. The combatants must resign themselves to hunger. They had reached the early hours of that Spartan day, June 6, when, at the barricade of St. Merry, Joan, surrounded by insurgents who cried for bread, answered: "Why? It is three o'clock; at four we shall be dead."

As they could no longer eat, Enjolras prohibited drinking. He put the wine under an interdict, and served out the spirits in rations.

Some fifteen full bottles, hermetically sealed, were found in the cellar. Enjolras and Combeferre examined them. Combeferre on coming up again said: "It belongs to Father Hucheloup's stock at the time when he was a grocer." "It must be real wine," observed Bossuet. "It is lucky that Grantaire is asleep, for if he were up we should have difficulty in saving those bottles." Enjolras, in spite of the murmurs, put his veto on the fifteen bottles; and in order that no one might touch them, and that they should be to some extent sacred, he had them placed under the table on which Father Mabœuf lay.

About two o'clock in the morning they counted their strength. There were still thirty-seven of them. Day was beginning to appear. The torch, which had been returned to its stone socket, was extinguished. The interior of the barricade, that species of small yard taken from the street, was bathed in shadows, and resembled, through the vague twilight horror, the deck of a dismasted ship. The combatants moved about like black forms. Above this frightful nest of gloom, the various stories of the silent houses stood out lividly; above them again the chimney-pots were assuming a roseate hue. The sky had that charming, undecided tint which may be white and may be blue. Birds flew about in it with twitterings of joy. The tall house which formed the back of the

barricade faced the east, and had a rosy reflection on its roof. At the third-floor window, the morning breeze fluttered the gray hair on the head of the dead man.

"I am delighted that the torch is put out," said Courfeyrac to Feuilly. "That flame flickering in the breeze annoyed me. It seemed to be frightened. The light of torches resembles the wisdom of cowards: it gives a bad light because it trembles."

Dawn arouses minds as well as birds; all were talking. Joly, seeing a cat stalking along a gutter, extracted this philosophy from the fact.

"What is the cat?" he exclaimed. "It is a corrective. The good God, having made a mouse, said to himself: 'Hullo! I have done a foolish thing.' And so he made the cat. The cat is the erratum of the mouse. The mouse plus the cat is the revised and corrected proof of creation."

Combeferre, surrounded by students and workmen, was talking of the dead, of Jean Prouvaire, of Bahorel, of Mabœuf, and even of the Cabbage-head, and the stern sorrow of Enjolras. He said: —

"Harmodius and Aristogiton, Brutus, Chereas, Stephanus, Cromwell, Charlotte Corday, and Sand, all had their moment of agony after the blow was struck. Our heart is so tremulous, and human life is such a mystery, that even in the case of a civic murder, even in a murder which sets men free, if there be such a thing, the remorse at having struck down an individual, exceeds the joy of having benefited the human race."

And, such are the meanderings of conversation, a moment later, by a transition caused by Jean Prouvaire's verses, Combeferre was comparing the translators of the Georgics — Raux with Cournand, Cournand with Delille,— and pointing out the few passages translated by Malfilâtre, especially the marvels which occurred at the death of Cæsar; and at that word, *Cæsar*, the conversation reverted to Brutus.

"Cæsar," said Combeferre, "fell justly. Cicero was severe to Cæsar, and he was in the right. Such severity is not

a diatribe. When Zoilus insults Homer, when Mævius insults Virgil, when Visè insults Molière, when Pope insults Shakespeare, when Fréon insults Voltaire, an old law of envy and hatred is carried out; for genius attracts insult, and great men are all barked at more or less. But Zoilus and Cicero are different. Cicero is an arbiter with thought, just as Brutus is an arbiter with the sword. For my part, I blame that last justice, the sword; but antiquity accepted it. Cæsar, the violator of the Rubicon, conferring, as if they came from him, dignities that proceeded from the people, and not rising on the entrance of the senate, acted, as Eutropius said, like a king, and almost like a tyrant,— *regia ac pæne tyrannica.* He was a great man; so much the worse or so much the better; the lesson is the more elevated. His three-and-twenty wounds affect me less than the spitting on the brow of Christ. Cæsar is stabbed by the senators; Christ is buffeted by soldiers. The god is seen in the greater amount of outrage."

Bossuet, overlooking the speakers from the top of a pile of paving-stones, exclaimed, gun in hand: —

"Oh, Cydathenæum! oh, Myrrhinus! oh, Probalynthus! oh, graces of Æantides! Oh, who will give me the power to pronounce the verses of Homer like a Greek of Laurium or Edapteon?"

CHAPTER III

LIGHTS AND SHADOWS

ENJOLRAS had gone out to reconnoitre. He slipped out by Mondétour Lane keeping in the shadow of the houses.

The insurgents, we must state, were full of hope. The way in which they had repulsed the night attack almost made them disdain in advance the attack at daybreak. They waited for it, and smiled at it. They no more doubted their

success than their cause. Moreover, help was evidently about to reach them; they reckoned on it. With that facility of triumphant prophecy which is a part of the strength of the fighting Frenchman, they divided the day into three distinct phases,— at six in the morning, a regiment which had been "worked upon," would turn; at midday, insurrection all over Paris; at sunset, the revolution.

They heard the tocsin of St. Merry, which had not once ceased since the previous evening; this was a proof that the other barricade, the great one, Joan's, still held out.

All these hopes were interchanged by the various groups in a sort of gay and formidable hum, which resembled the warlike buzzing of a swarm of bees.

Enjolras re-appeared, returning from his gloomy flight into outer darkness. He listened for a moment to all this joy, with his arms folded. Then, fresh and rosy in the growing light of dawn, he said:

"The whole army of Paris is out. One-third of that army is preparing to attack the barricade behind which you now are. There is, too, the National Guard. I made out the shakos of the fifth regiment of the line, and the guidons of the sixth legion. You will be attacked in an hour. As for the people, they were in a state of ferment yesterday, but this morning they do not stir. There is nothing to wait for; nothing to hope. Neither a faubourg nor a regiment. You are abandoned."

These words fell on the buzzing groups, and produced the same effect that the first drops of a storm do on a swarm. All were dumb. There was a moment of inexpressible silence, in which death might have been heard flying past.

This moment was short. A voice shouted to Enjolras from the thickest of the crowd: —

"Be it so! Let us raise the barricade to a height of twenty feet, and let all remain within it. Citizens, let us offer the protest of corpses. Let us show that if the people abandon the republicans, the republicans do not abandon the people."

These words disengaged the thoughts of all from the pain-

ful cloud of individual anxieties. An enthusiastic shout greeted them.

The name of the man who spoke thus was never known; he was some unknown blouse-wearer, a stranger, a forgotten man, a passing hero, that great anonymous always mixed up in human crises and social geneses, who at the given moment utters the decisive word in a supreme fashion, and who fades away into darkness, after having represented for a minute, in a lightning flash, the people and God.

This inexorable resolution so filled the air of June 6, 1832, that almost at the selfsame hour the insurgents of the St. Merry barricade uttered the cry, which became historical, and was consigned to the documents in the case: "Whether they come to our help or whether they do not, what matter? Let us all die here, to the last man." As we see, the two barricades, though materially isolated, communicated.

CHAPTER IV

FIVE LESS AND ONE MORE

AFTER the man, whoever he might be, who decreed the "protest of corpses," had spoken, and given the formula of their common soul, a strangely satisfied and terrible cry issued from every mouth, funereal in its meaning and triumphant in its tone: —

"Long live death! Let us all remain here."

"Why all?" asked Enjolras.

"All, all!"

Enjolras continued: —

"The position is good; the barricade is fine. Thirty men are enough. Why sacrifice forty?"

They replied: —

"Because not one of us will consent to depart."

" Citizens," cried Enjolras, and there was an almost angry ring in his voice, " the republic is not rich enough in men to make an unnecessary outlay of them. Vainglory is foolish waste. If it be the duty of some to go, that duty must be performed like any other."

Enjolras, the man-principal, had over his co-religionists that sort of omnipotent power which emanates from the absolute. Still, however great that omnipotence might be, they murmured. A chief to the tips of his fingers, Enjolras, seeing that they murmured, insisted. He continued haughtily: —

" Let those who are afraid to be only thirty say so."

The murmurs were redoubled.

" Besides," remarked a voice in the throng, " it is easy to talk about going. The barricade is surrounded."

" Not on the side of the Markets," said Enjolras. " The Rue Mondétour is free, and the Marché des Innocents can be reached by the Rue des Prêcheurs."

" And there," another voice in the group remarked, " we should be caught. We should fall in with some sentry of the line or the National Guard. They will see a man passing in blouse and cap. ' Where do you come from? Don't you belong to the barricade? ' and they will look at your hands. You smell of powder; you will be shot."

Enjolras, without answering, touched Combeferre's shoulder, and both entered the ground-floor room.

They came out again a moment after. Enjolras held in his outstretched hands the four uniforms which he had laid aside, and Combeferre followed him, carrying the cross-belts and shakos.

" In this uniform," said Enjolras, " you can easily mingle with the ranks and escape. Here are four, at any rate." And he threw the uniforms on the unpaved ground.

No one moved in the stoical audience. Combeferre resolved to make an appeal.

" Come," he said, " you must show a little pity. Do you know what the question is here? It is a question of women.

Look here, are there wives,— yes, or no? Are there children,— yes, or no? Are there mothers,— yes, or no,— who rock a cradle with their foot and have a heap of children around them? Let him among you who has never seen a nurse's breast hold up his hand. Ah, you wish to be killed? So do I too,— I who am speaking to you; but I do not wish to feel the ghosts of women twining their arms around me. Die,— very good, but do not make others die. Suicides like the one which is about to take place here are sublime, but suicide is restricted, and does not allow of extension; and so soon as it affects your neighbours, suicide becomes murder. Think of the little fair heads, and think, too, of the white hair. Listen to me. Enjolras tells me that just now he saw at the corner of the Rue du Cygne a candle at a poor window, on the fifth-floor, and against the panes the tremulous shadow of an old woman, who seemed to have spent the whole night in watching at the window and waiting. Perhaps she is the mother of one of you. Well, let that man go and hasten to say to his mother, 'Mother, here I am!' Let him be at ease; the work will be done here all the same. When a man supports his relatives by his toil, he has no longer any right to sacrifice himself. That is deserting his family. And then, too, those who have daughters, and those who have sisters, only think of them! You let yourselves be killed. You are dead; very good. And to-morrow? It is terrible when girls have no bread. Man begs, woman sells. Oh, those charming, graceful, gentle creatures with flowers in their caps, who fill the house with chastity, who sing, who prattle, who are like a living perfume, who prove the existence of angels in heaven by the purity of virgins on earth,— that Jane, that Lisa, that Mimi, those adorable and honest creatures who are your blessing and your pride,— ah, my God! they will starve. What shall I say to you? There is a human flesh-market; and it is not with your shadowy hands, fluttering around them, that you will prevent them entering. Think of the street, think of the pavement covered with strollers, think of the shops before which women, with necks all bare, come and go in the mud,

Those women, too, were once pure. Think of your sisters, you who have sisters. Misery, prostitution, the police, St. Lazare, that is where those delicate maidens, those fragile marvels of chastity, modesty, and beauty, fresher than the lilacs in May, will end. Ah, you have let yourselves be killed! Ah, you are no longer there! That is well; you wished to rescue the people from royalty, and you give your daughters to the police. My friends, take care; have pity. We are not wont to think much about women, hapless women. We trust to the fact that women have not received the education of men. We prevent them from reading, thinking, or occupying themselves with politics; but will you prevent them from going to-night to the Morgue and recognizing your corpses? Come, those who have families must be good fellows, and shake hands and go away, and leave us here to do this job alone. I am well aware that it takes some courage to go, that it is hard; but the harder it is, the more meritorious. You say: 'I have a gun. I am at the barricade. So much the worse, I shall remain.' 'So much the worse' is easily said. My friends, there is a morrow; that morrow you will not see, but your families will. And what sufferings! Stay, do you know what becomes of a healthy child with cheeks like an apple, who chatters, babbles, prattles, laughs, and smells sweet when you kiss him, when he is abandoned? I saw one, quite little, about so high. His father was dead. Poor people had taken him in out of charity, but they had not bread for themselves. The child was always hungry. It was winter-time. He did not cry. He would go close to the stove, in which there was never any fire, and whose pipe, you know, was puttied with yellow earth. The boy broke off a little of this earth with his fingers and ate it. His breathing was hoarse, his face livid, his legs soft, and his stomach swollen. He said nothing. When you spoke to him he made no answer. He is dead. He was brought to die at the Necker Hospital, where I saw him. I was house-surgeon there. Now, if there be any fathers among you, fathers who delight in taking a walk on Sunday, holding in their big, kind hand

a child's small fingers, let each of those fathers fancy this lad his own. I remember that poor brat perfectly. I can see him now, as he lay naked on the dissecting-table. His ribs stood out under his skin like the graves under the grass of a cemetery. We found a sort of mud in his stomach. He had ashes between his teeth. Come, let us examine our conscience and take counsel with our heart. Statistics prove that the mortality among deserted children is fifty-five per cent. I repeat, it is a question of wives, of mothers, of daughters, and babes. I say nothing of yourselves. I know very well what you are. I know that you are all brave. Zounds! I know that you all long in your hearts for the joy and the glory of laying down your lives for the great cause. I know very well that you feel yourselves chosen to die usefully and magnificently, and that each of you clings to his share of the triumph. Very good. But you are not alone in this world. There are others of whom you must think. You must not be selfish."

All hung their heads with a gloomy air. Strange contradictions of the human heart at its sublimest moments! Combeferre, who spoke thus, was not an orphan. He remembered the mothers of other men, and forgot his own. He was going to be killed. He was " selfish."

Marius, fasting and feverish, having successively given up all hopes, stranded in grief, the most mournful of shipwrecks, saturated with violent emotions, and feeling that the end was near, had buried himself deeper and deeper in that visionary stupor which ever precedes the fatal and voluntarily accepted hour.

A physiologist might have studied in him the growing symptoms of that febrile absorption which is known and classified by science, and which is to suffering what voluptuousness is to pleasure. Despair, also, has its ecstasy. Marius had attained that stage. He looked at everything from without. As we have said, things which occurred before him appeared to him remote. He distinguished the general effect, but did not perceive the details. He saw people coming and going before

him as in a glare of light. He heard voices speaking as if from the bottom of an abyss.

Still, this affected him. There was in this scene a point which reached even him, and aroused him. He had but one idea now,— to die, and he did not wish to be turned from this; but he thought, in his gloomy somnambulism, that in destroying himself, he was not prohibited from saving some one else. He raised his voice: —

"Enjolras and Combeferre are right," he said; "let us have no useless sacrifice. I join them; and we must make haste. Combeferre has told you decisive things. There are men among you who have families,— mothers, sisters, wives, and children. Let all such leave the ranks."

Not a soul stirred.

"Married men and supporters of families, leave the ranks!" repeated Marius.

His authority was great. Enjolras was really the chief of the barricade, but Marius was its saviour.

"I command you!" cried Enjolras.

"I implore you!" said Marius.

Then those heroic men, stirred by Combeferre's speech, shaken by Enjolras's order, and moved by Marius's entreaty, began to denounce one another. "It is true," said one young man to an older man. "You are the father of a family; begone!" "No; you ought rather to do so," replied the man, "for you have two sisters to support." And an unheard-of contest broke out. Each struggled lest he should be thrust out of the tomb.

"Make haste!" said Combeferre; "in a quarter of an hour it will be too late."

"Citizens," added Enjolras, "this is the republic, and universal suffrage reigns. Point out yourselves the men who are to leave us."

They obeyed. In a few minutes five were unanimously pointed out and left the ranks.

"There are five of them!" exclaimed Marius.

There were only four uniforms.

"Well," replied the five, "one must stay behind."

And then they quarrelled as to who should remain, and each found reasons why the others should not stay. The generous struggle began again.

"You have a wife who loves you."—"You have your old mother,"—"You have neither father nor mother; what will become of your three little brothers?"—"You are the father of five children."—"You have a right to live, you are only seventeen; it is too early for you to die."

These great revolutionary barricades were meeting-places for heroism. The improbable was simple there. Those men did not astonish each other.

"Make haste!" repeated Courfeyrac.

Cries to Marius came from the groups:—

"You must point out the one who is to remain."

"Yes!" said the five; "do you choose. We will obey you."

Marius had not believed himself capable of any further emotion; and yet, at this idea of choosing a man for death, all the blood flowed back to his heart. He would have turned pale, could he have grown paler. He stepped up to the five, who smiled upon him, and each, with his eyes full of that grand flame which gleams through history over those who died at Thermopylæ, cried to him:—

"Me! Me! Me!"

And Marius stupidly counted them. There were still five! Then his eyes settled on the four uniforms.

All at once a fifth uniform fell, as if from heaven, on the other four.

The fifth man was saved.

Marius raised his eyes, and recognized M. Fauchelevent.

Jean Valjean had just entered the barricade.

Whether by asking questions, by instinct, or by accident, he had arrived by way of Mondétour Lane. Thanks to his National Guard uniform, he passed without difficulty.

The sentinel stationed in the Rue Mondétour by the insurgents saw no cause to give the alarm for a single National Guard, and had let him enter the street, saying to himself:

" He is probably a reinforcement, or at the worst a prisoner." The moment was too serious for a sentry to turn from his duty or his post of observation.

At the moment when Jean Valjean entered the redoubt, no one noticed him, for all eyes were fixed on the five chosen men and the four uniforms. Jean Valjean, however, had seen and heard, and silently took off his coat and threw it on the pile formed by the other coats. The emotion was indescribable.

" Who is this man? " asked Bossuet.

" He is a man," replied Combeferre, " who saves his fellow-men."

Marius added in a grave voice: —

" I know him."

This security was sufficient for all. Enjolras turned to Jean Valjean: " Citizen, you are welcome." And he added: " You know that we are about to die."

Jean Valjean, without answering, helped the insurgent whom he was saving, to put on his uniform.

CHAPTER V

THE VIEW FROM THE TOP OF A BARRICADE.

THE situation of the whole party in that fatal hour, and at that inexorable spot, had as result and culminating point the supreme melancholy of Enjolras.

Enjolras had within him the plenitude of the revolution. He was imperfect, however, so far as the absolute can be so. He had too much of St. Just and not enough of Anacharsis Clootz; still, his mind, in the society of the Friends of the A. B. C., had eventually received a certain magnetic influence from Combeferre's ideas. For some time past he had been gradually emerging from the narrow form of dogmatism, and yielding to the broadening effect of progress;

and in the end, he had accepted, as a definitive and magnificent evolution, the transformation of the great French Republic into the immense human republic. As for the immediate means, given a violent situation, he wished them to be violent. On that point he did not vary; and he still belonged to that epic and terrible school which is summed up in the words "'93."

Enjolras stood on the paving-stone steps, one elbow on the barrel of his gun. He was thinking; he trembled, as men do when a blast passes. Spots where death lurks produce this tripod effect. A sort of stifled fire flashed from his eyes, which were filled with an inward glance. All at once he raised his head, his light hair fell back like that of the angel on the dark chariot made of stars. It was like the mane of a startled lion surrounded by a fiery halo, and he cried: —

"Citizens, do you think of the future? The streets of towns bathed in light; green branches on the thresholds; all nations sisters; men just; old men blessing children; the past loving the present; perfect liberty of thought; believers enjoying perfect equality; for religion, heaven; God the direct priest; the human conscience converted into an altar; no more hatred; the fraternity of the workshop and the school; notoriety the sole punishment and reward; work for all, right for all, peace for all; no more bloodshed, no more wars; happy mothers! To subdue matter is the first step; to realize the ideal is the second. Reflect on what progress has already done. Formerly, the first human races saw with terror the hydra that breathed upon the waters, the dragon that vomited fire, the griffin which was the monster of the air, and which flew with the wings of an eagle and the claws of a tiger, pass before their eyes,— frightful beasts which were superior to man. Man, however, set his snares,— the sacred snares of intellect,— and at last captured the monsters. We have subdued the hydra, and it is called the steamboat. We have tamed the dragon, and it is called the locomotive; we are on the point of taming the griffin, we already hold it in our

grasp, and it is called the balloon. The day when that Promethean task is terminated, when man has definitely harnessed to his will the triple chimera of antiquity,— the dragon, the hydra, and the griffin,— he will be master of water, fire, and air, and he will be to the rest of animated creation what the ancient gods formerly were to him. Courage, and forward! Citizens, whither are we going? To science made into government, to the strength of things converted into the sole public strength, to the natural law having its sanction and penalty in itself, and promulgating itself by evidence, to a dawn of truth corresponding with the dawn of day. We are advancing toward the union of all peoples; we are advancing to the unity of man. No more fictions; no more parasites. The real governed by the true, that is our object. Civilization will hold its assizes at the summit of Europe, and eventually, at the centre of continents, in a great parliament of intellect. Something like this has been seen already. The Amphictyons held two sessions a year, one at Delphi, the abode of the gods, the other at Thermopylæ, the home of heroes. Europe will have her Amphictyons, the globe will have its Amphictyons; France bears this sublime future within her. This is the gestation of the nineteenth century. What Greece sketched out is worthy to be finished by France. Listen to me, you, Feuilly, valiant workman, man of the people, man of the peoples! I revere you. Yes, you see the future clearly; yes, you are right. You have neither father nor mother, Feuilly; you have adopted Humanity as your mother and Right as your father. You are about to die here,— that is to say, to triumph. Citizens, whatever may happen to-day, we are about to make a revolution, by our defeat as well as by our victory. As fires light up a whole city, so revolutions light up the whole human race. And what is the revolution which we shall make? I have just told you, the Revolution of the True. From a political point of view, there is but one principle,— the sovereignty of man over himself. This sovereignty of myself over myself is called Liberty. Where two or three of these sovereignties are united, the State be-

gins. But in this association there is no abdication. Each sovereignty freely yields a certain amount to form the common right. This quantity is the same for all. This identity of concession which each makes to all is called Equality. Common right is nought but the protection of all radiating over the right of each. This protection of all over each is termed Fraternity. The point of intersection of all these aggregated sovereignties is called Society. This intersection being a junction, this point is a knot. Hence comes what is called the social tie. Some say the social contract, which is the same thing, as the word contract is etymologically formed with the idea of a tie. Let us come to an understanding about equality; for, if liberty be the summit, equality is the base. Equality, citizens, is not the whole of society on a level,— a society of tall blades of grass and small oaks, or a number of entangled jealousies. It is, legally speaking, every aptitude having the same opportunity for a career; politically, all votes having the same weight; religiously, all consciences having the same right. Equality has an organ, — gratuitous and compulsory education. We must begin with the right to the alphabet. The primary school imposed on all, the secondary school offered to all,— such is the law. From the identical school issues an equal society. Yes, instruction! light! light! Everything comes from light, and everything returns to it. Citizens, the nineteenth century is great, but the twentieth century will be happy. Then there will be nothing left resembling ancient history. There will be no longer cause to fear, as now, conquest, invasion, usurpation, armed rivalry of nations, an interruption of civilization depending on a marriage of kings, on a birth in hereditary tyrannies, a division of peoples by a congress, a dismemberment by the collapse of a dynasty, a combat of two religions, meeting face to face, like two goats in the darkness, on the bridge of infinity. There will be no longer cause to fear famine, sweating, prostitution through distress, misery through stoppage of work, and the scaffold and the sword, and battles, and all the brigandage of chance in the forest of

events. We might almost say: There will be no more events. We shall be happy. The human race will accomplish its law as the terrestrial globe does its law; harmony will be restored between the soul and the star. The soul will gravitate round the truth, as the planet does round light. Friends, the present hour is a gloomy one; but there are such terrible purchases of the future. A revolution is a toll. Oh, the human race will be delivered, lifted up, and consoled! We affirm it on this barricade. Where should the cry of love be raised, if not on the heights of sacrifice? Oh, my brothers, this is the meeting-point of those who think and those who suffer. This barricade is not made of paving-stones, beams, and iron bars; it is made of two things,— of ideas and of sufferings. Here misery meets the ideal. Here day embraces night, and says to it: 'I die with thee, and thou shalt be born again with me.' Faith springs from the embrace of all desolations. Sufferings bring hither their agony, and ideas their immortality. This agony and this immortality are about to mingle and constitute our death. Brothers, the man who dies here, dies in the radiance of the future; and we shall enter a tomb flooded with dawn."

Enjolras paused, rather than became silent. His lips still moved silently, as if he were talking to himself, which attracted his hearers; and hoping still to hear him, they gazed at him. There was no applause, but they whispered together for a long time. Language being a breath, the rustling of intellects resembles the rustling of leaves.

CHAPTER VI

MARIUS HAGGARD, JAVERT LACONIC

LET us describe what was going on in Marius's thoughts. Our readers will remember his state of mind. As we just said, everything was a vision to him now. His judgment was disturbed. He was (we urge the fact) beneath

the shadow of the great shadowy wings opened above the dying. He felt that he had entered the tomb; he fancied that he was already on the other side of the wall, and he no longer saw the faces of the living save with the eyes of a dead man.

How had M. Fauchelevent come there? Why was he there, and what did he come to do? Marius did not ask himself all these questions. Moreover, as our despair has this peculiar thing about it, that it envelops others as it does ourselves, it appeared to him logical that everybody should come there to die. Only he thought of Cosette with a pang. However, M. Fauchelevent did not speak to him, did not look at him, and did not even seem to hear Marius when he raised his voice, saying: "I know him."

As for Marius, this attitude of M. Fauchelevent relieved him; and if such a word be permissible for such impressions, we might say that it pleased him. He had always felt the absolute impossibility of addressing this enigmatical man, who struck him as both equivocal and imposing. It was a very long time, too, since he had seen him; and this increased the impossibility for a timid and reserved nature like that of Marius.

The five men selected left the barricade by Mondétour Lane, perfectly resembling National Guards. One of them wept as he went away. Before they left, they embraced those who remained.

When the five men sent back to life had gone, Enjolras thought of the one condemned to death.

He went to the bar-room. Javert, tied to the post, was reflecting.

"Do you want anything?" asked Enjolras.

Javert answered:—

"When will you kill me?"

"Wait. We want all our cartridges just now."

"Then give me a drink," said Javert.

Enjolras himself offered him a glass of water, and as Javert was bound, helped him to drink.

"Is that all?" resumed Enjolras.

"I am uncomfortable at this post," replied Javert. "You did not act kindly in leaving me fastened to it all night. Bind me as you please, but you might surely lay me on a table, like that other man." And with a movement of his head, he pointed to M. Mabœuf's corpse.

It will be remembered that there was, at the end of the room, a long broad table, on which bullets had been run and cartridges made. All the cartridges being made, and all the powder used, this table was free.

By Enjolras's order four insurgents unfastened Javert from the post. While they did so, a fifth held a bayonet to his breast. His hands remained fastened behind his back; a strong slender cord was attached to his feet, which enabled him to take steps some fifteen inches long, like those who are about to mount the scaffold, and he was forced to walk to the table at the end of the room, on which they laid him, securely fastened round the waist. For greater security they added to the system of ligatures, by means of a rope tied to his neck, which rendered escape impossible, the sort of knot called in prisons a martingale, which starts from the nape of the neck, crosses on the stomach, and meets round the hands, after passing between the legs.

While Javert was being bound, a man standing in the doorway regarded him with singular attention; and the shadow this man cast caused Javert to turn his head. He raised his eyes, and recognized Jean Valjean. He did not even start; he merely looked down haughtily and said: "It is quite natural."

CHAPTER VII

THE SITUATION BECOMES WORSE

DAY dawned rapidly. Not a window opened, not a door was ajar. It was the dawn, not the awaking. The end of the Rue de la Chanvrerie, opposite the barricade, had been evacuated by the troops, as we stated. It appeared to

be free, and lay open for passers-by with sinister tranquillity. The Rue St. Denis was dumb as the Avenue of Sphinxes at Thebes. There was not a living being at the cross-roads, which a sunbeam illumined. Nothing is so melancholy as this brightness of deserted streets.

Nothing could be seen, but something could be heard. There was a mysterious movement at a certain distance. It was evident that the critical moment was at hand. As on the previous evening, the sentries fell back; but now all did so.

The barricade was stronger than at the first attack. Since the departure of the five, it had been raised still higher.

By the advice of the sentinel who had been watching the region of the Markets, Enjolras, for fear of a surprise in the rear, formed a serious resolution. He barricaded the small passage of Mondétour Lane, which had hitherto remained free. For this purpose, a further portion of the street was unpaved. In this way the barricade, walled up on three sides, — in front on the Rue de la Chanvrerie, on the left on the Rue du Cygne and the Petite Truanderie, and on the right on the Rue Mondétour,— was truly almost impregnable; it is true that they were fatally enclosed within it. It had three fronts but no outlet. It was a fortress, but a mouse-trap, too, as Courfeyrac said with a laugh.

Enjolras had some thirty paving-stones piled up by the door of the inn, which, as Bossuet said, had been "torn up over and above."

The silence was now so profound in that direction whence the attack must come, that Enjolras ordered all his men to return to their posts. A ration of brandy was distributed to each one.

Nothing is more curious than a barricade preparing for an assault. Every man chooses his place, as at the theatre. They crowd, elbow, and shoulder one another. Some make stalls of paving-stones. Here an angle of the wall is in the way; they leave it. Here is a redan which may afford protection; they seek shelter in it. Left-handed men are precious; they take places inconvenient for others. Many

arrange to fight seated. They wish to be at their ease to kill, and to die comfortably. In the fatal war of June, 1848, an insurgent, who was a wonderful marksman, and who fought from a terraced roof, had a reclining chair brought out, and was knocked over in it by a volley of grape-shot.

So soon as the chief has given the signal for action, all disorderly movements cease. There is no longer any sharp-shooting, any conversation or side speech. All that their minds contain converges, and is changed into the waiting for the assailant. A barricade before danger comes is chaos; in danger, it is discipline. Peril produces order.

So soon as Enjolras had taken his double-barrelled gun, and placed himself at a sort of embrasure which he had reserved for himself, all were silent. A sharp crackling ran confusedly along the wall of paving-stones; it was the men cocking their muskets.

Moreover their attitudes were haughtier, more confident than ever; excess of sacrifice strengthens. They no longer had hope, but they had despair,— despair, that last weapon which sometimes gives victory, as Virgil tells us. Supreme resources spring from extreme resolutions. To embark in death is sometimes the means of escaping shipwreck, and the lid of the coffin becomes a plank of safety.

As on the previous evening, all attention was turned — we might almost say rested — upon the end of the street, which was now lighted up and visible.

They had not long to wait. The movement began again distinctly in the direction of St. Leu, but it did not resemble the sound of the first attack. A rattling of chains, the alarming jolt of a heavy weight, a clangor of cannon leaping over the pavement, and a sort of solemn uproar announced that a sinister engine of war was approaching. There was a tremor in the entrails of those peaceful old streets, pierced and built for the fruitful circulation of interests and ideas, and not made for the monstrous roll of the wheels of war. All eyes turned toward the end of the street and became fierce.

A cannon appeared.

The gunners pushed the gun. It was in fighting trim,—the limber was detached; two men supported the carriage; four were at the wheels; others followed with the tumbrel. The lighted match smoked.

"Fire!" shouted Enjolras.

The whole barricade burst into flame; the report was frightful. An avalanche of smoke covered and concealed the gun and the men. A few seconds after, the cloud dispersed, and the gun and the men re-appeared; the gunners brought it up to the front of the barricade, slowly, correctly, and without haste. Not one had been wounded. Then the captain of the gun, hanging with his whole weight on the breech to elevate the muzzle, began to point the cannon, with the gravity of an astronomer setting a telescope.

"Bravo for the artillery!" cried Bossuet.

And all the men at the barricade clapped their hands.

A moment later, the gun squarely planted in the very centre of the street, across the gutter, was in position. A formidable mouth yawned on the barricade.

"Come, cheerily, boys!" said Courfeyrac. "This is the brutal part of it. After the fillip on the nose, the blow with the fist. The army is stretching its heavy paw toward us. The barricade is going to be seriously shaken up. The musketry fire feels the way, the cannon captures."

"It is an eight-pounder, of the new pattern, in bronze," added Combeferre. "Those guns, if the proportion of ten parts of tin to one hundred of copper is exceeded, are liable to burst; for the excess of tin renders them too soft. It thus happens that they have holes and cavities in the vent. In order to obviate this danger, and to enable one to increase the charge, it would perhaps be advisable to return to the process of the fourteenth century, circling and reinforcing the gun with a series of steel rings, without any welding, from the breech to the trunnions. In the meanwhile, they remedy the defect as well as they can; they manage to discover where the holes are in the vent of the gun by means of

a searcher. But there is a better method,— Gribeauval's movable star."

"In the sixteenth century," observed Bossuet, "guns were rifled."

"Yes," replied Combeferre, "that adds to the projectile force, but lessens the correctness of aim. At short range, the trajectory has not all the desirable rigidity, the parabola is exaggerated, the path of the projectile is not sufficiently rectilinear for it to hit intermediate objects, though that is a necessity of battle, whose importance grows with the proximity of the enemy and the precipitation of the discharge. This defective tension of the curve of the projectile in rifled cannon of the sixteenth century emanated from the weakness of the charge. Weak charges for such engines are imposed by the ballistic necessities,— such, for instance, as the preservation of the gun-carriage. After all, that despot, the cannon, cannot do all that it wishes; strength is a great weakness. A cannon-ball only travels six hundred leagues an hour; light travels seventy thousand leagues a second. Such is the superiority of Jesus Christ over Napoleon."

"Reload your guns!" said Enjolras.

How would the casing of the barricade behave under the cannon-balls? Would a breach be made? That was the question.

While the insurgents were reloading their guns, the artillery-men loaded their cannon.

The anxiety within the redoubt was profound.

The shot was fired, and the report burst forth.

"Present!" cried a joyous voice.

And as the cannon-ball struck the barricade, Gavroche bounded inside it.

He came from the direction of the Rue du Cygne, and nimbly clambered over the collateral barricade which fronted the labyrinth of the Rue de la Petite Truanderie.

Gavroche produced a greater effect in the barricade than the cannon-ball did. The ball was lost in the heap of rubbish. The most it did was to break an omnibus wheel

and finish off the old truck. On seeing this, the insurgents burst into a laugh.

"Go on!" shouted Bossuet to the gunners.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ARTILLERY-MEN SET TO WORK IN EARNEST

GAVROCHE was surrounded.

But he had no time to tell anything. Marius, shuddering, drew him aside.

"What are you here for?"

"What a question!" said the boy; "and you, pray?" And he gazed fixedly at Marius with his epic effrontery. His eyes grew larger with the proud light within them.

It was with a stern accent that Marius continued:

"Who told you to return? At least, I hope that you delivered my letter at its address."

Gavroche felt some degree of remorse in the matter of that letter. In his haste to return to the barricade, he had got rid of it rather than delivered it. He was forced to confess to himself that he had confided it somewhat too lightly to that stranger, whose face he had not even been able to make out. It is true that this man was bareheaded, but that was not enough. In short, he reproached himself silently for his conduct, and he feared Marius's reproaches. He took the simplest way to get out of the scrape,— he told an abominable falsehood.

"Citizen, I delivered the letter to the porter. The lady was asleep. She will have the letter when she wakes."

Marius had two objects in sending the letter,— to bid Cosette farewell and to save Gavroche. He was obliged to satisfy himself with one-half of what he wanted.

The connection between the sending of that letter and

M. Fauchelevent's presence at the barricade occurred to his mind, and he pointed him out to Gavroche.

"Do you know that man?"

"No," said Gavroche.

Gavroche, in truth, as we are aware, had seen Jean Valjean only by night.

The anxious, morbid conjectures formed in Marius's mind were dissipated. Did he know M. Fauchelevent's opinions? Perhaps he was a republican. Hence his presence in this conflict would be perfectly natural.

Meantime, Gavroche had run to the other end of the barricade, crying: "My gun!"

Courfeyrac ordered it to be given to him.

Gavroche warned "his comrades," as he called them, that the barricade was invested. He had found great difficulty in reaching it. A battalion of the line, with their arms stacked in the Petite Truanderie, was on the alert in the direction of the Rue de Cygne. On the opposite side, the Municipal Guard occupied the Rue des Prêcheurs, while in front of them was the main body of the army. This information given, Gavroche added: —

"I give you leave to dust their jackets well for 'em."

Enjolras was in the mean while straining his ears at his loophole.

The assailants, doubtless dissatisfied with their shot, had not repeated it.

A company of infantry of the line had come up to occupy the end of the street, behind the cannon. The soldiers tore up the pavement, and built with the stones a small, low wall, — a sort of epaulement, only eighteen inches high, and facing the barricade. At the left-hand corner of this work could be seen the head of the column of a battalion from the suburbs, massed in the Rue St. Denis.

Enjolras, from his post, fancied he could hear the peculiar sound produced by canister when taken out of the caissons; and he saw the captain of the gun change his aim and turn the mouth of the cannon slightly to the left. Then the

gunners began to load. The captain of the gun himself took the port-fire and lowered it to the vent.

"Down with your heads! Hug the wall!" shouted Enjolras. "To your knees all along the barricade!"

The insurgents, scattered in front of the wine-shop, who had left their posts on Gavroche's arrival, rushed pell-mell toward the barricade; but before Enjolras's order could be executed, the discharge took place with the frightful rattle of a round of grape-shot. It was one, in fact.

The shot was aimed at the opening in the redoubt, and ricocheted against the wall, killing two men and wounding three.

If this continued, the barricade would be no longer tenable. The grape-shot entered it. There was a murmur of consternation.

"At least let us prevent a second round," said Enjolras; and, lowering his rifle, he aimed at the captain of the gun, who at that moment was leaning on the breech, correcting and fixing the aim. The captain was a handsome young sergeant of artillery, fair, with a gentle face and the intelligent look peculiar to that predestined and terrible weapon which, by dint of perfecting itself in horror, must end by killing war.

Combeferre, who was standing beside Enjolras, gazed at this young man.

"What a pity!" said Combeferre. "What a hideous thing such butchery is! Well, when there are no more kings, there will be no more war. Enjolras, you are aiming at that sergeant; you are not looking at him. Just reflect that he is a handsome young man. He is intrepid; it is evident that he is a thinker. These young artillery-men are well educated. He has a father, a mother, and a family; he is probably in love; he is but twenty-five years of age at the most; he might be your brother."

"He is," said Enjolras.

"Yes," added Combeferre, "and mine too. Do not kill him."

"Let me alone. What must be, must be."

And a tear slowly coursed down Enjolras's marble cheek.

At the same time he pulled the trigger. The fire flashed forth. The artillery-man turned twice on his heel, his arms stretched out before him, and his head raised as if to breathe the air; then he fell across the cannon and lay there motionless. They could see his back, from the middle of which a jet of blood gushed forth. The bullet had gone right through his chest. He was dead. He was borne away, and his place was filled up. Several minutes were thus gained.

CHAPTER IX

THE POACHER'S SKILL, AND THE UNERRING SHOT WHICH INFLUENCED THE SENTENCE IN 1796

OPINIONS varied in the barricade. The firing of the cannon was about to begin again. The barricade could not hold out for a quarter of an hour against that grape-shot. It was absolutely necessary to deaden the blows. Enjolras gave the command: —

"We must put a mattress there."

"We have none," said Combeferre; "the wounded are lying on them."

Jean Valjean, seated apart on a stone post at the corner of the wine-shop, with his gun between his legs, had not, up to the present moment, taken any part in what was going on. He did not seem to hear the combatants saying around him: "There is a gun that does nothing." On hearing the order given by Enjolras, he rose.

It will be remembered that on the arrival of the insurgents in the Rue de la Chanvrerie, an old woman, in her terror of the bullets, placed her mattress in front of her window. This window, a garret window, was on the roof of a six-story house, situated just beyond the barricade. The mattress,

placed crosswise, resting at the bottom upon two clothes-props, was held at the top by two ropes, which, in the distance, looked like two pieces of pack-thread, and which were fastened to nails driven into the window-frames. These ropes could be distinctly seen, like hairs against the sky.

"Can any one lend me a double-barrelled gun?" asked Jean Valjean.

Enjolras, who had just reloaded his, handed it to him.

Jean Valjean aimed at the garret-window and fired. One of the two ropes of the mattress was cut. It hung by one thread only. Jean Valjean fired the second shot. The second rope lashed the panes of the garret-window. The mattress glided between the two poles and fell into the street. The insurgents applauded, and every voice cried: —

"There is a mattress!"

"Yes," said Combeferre; "but who will go and fetch it?"

The mattress, in truth, had fallen outside the barricade, between the besiegers and the besieged. Now, as the death of the sergeant of artillery had exasperated the troops, the soldiers had for some moments been lying flat on their stomachs behind the line of paving-stones, which they had raised; and to make up for the enforced silence of the cannon, which was hushed until its crew could be reorganized, they had opened fire on the barricade. The insurgents, wishing to save their ammunition, did not return this musketry. The fusillade was broken by the barricade; but the street, which it filled with bullets, was terrible.

Jean Valjean stepped out of the gap, entered the street, traversed the hail of bullets, went to the mattress, picked it up, placed it on his back, and, re-entering the barricade, himself placed the mattress in the gap, and fixed it against the wall in such fashion that the gunners should not see it.

This done, they awaited the next round. It was not long in coming.

The cannon belched forth its canister with a hoarse roar. But there was no ricochet. The grape-shot was checked by

the mattress. The expected result was obtained. The barricade was saved.

"Citizen," said Enjolras to Jean Valjean, "the republic thanks you."

Bossuet admired and laughed. He exclaimed:—

"It is immoral for a mattress to have so much power. It is the triumph of that which yields over that which hurls thunder-bolts. But no matter, glory to the mattress that annuls a cannon!"

CHAPTER X

DAWN

AT this moment Cosette awoke.

Her bedroom was narrow, neat, modest, with a long window on the east side, looking out into the rear courtyard of the house.

Cosette knew nothing of what was going on in Paris. She had not been there the evening before, and she was in her room when Toussaint said: "It seems there is a row."

Cosette had slept only a few hours, but well. She had had sweet dreams, which resulted, perhaps, from the fact that her small bed was very white. Somebody, who was Marius, appeared to her in a flood of light. She awoke with the sun in her eyes, which at first produced the effect of a continuation of her dream. Her first thought on coming out of this dream was of a smiling nature. She felt quite reassured. Like Jean Valjean a few hours before, she was passing through that reaction of the soul which absolutely refuses to accept misfortune. She began to hope with all her might, without knowing why. Then her heart ached. She had not seen Marius for three days; but she said to herself that he must have received her letter, that he knew where she was, and that he was so clever that he would find means of reaching

her,— and that most certainly to-day, and perhaps that very morning. It was bright daylight; but the sunbeams were nearly horizontal, so she thought that it must be very early, but that she must rise, in order to receive Marius.

She felt that she could not live without Marius, and that, consequently, that was enough, and Marius would come. No objection was admissible. All this was certain. It was monstrous enough to have suffered for three days! Marius absent for three days! that was horrible on the part of Providence. Now this cruel suspense, sent from on high, was over and past, Marius would come and would bring good news. Thus is youth constituted; it wipes away its tears quickly, and, finding sorrow useless, does not accept it.

Youth is the smile of the future in the presence of an unknown quantity, which is itself. It is natural to it to be happy. It seems as if its very breath were made of hope.

However, Cosette could not succeed in recalling to mind what Marius had said to her on the subject of this absence, which was to last only one day, and what explanation he had given her of it. Every one has noticed with what skill a coin let fall on the ground runs away and hides, and what art it has in making itself invisible. There are thoughts which play us the same trick. They conceal themselves in a corner of our brain; that is the end of them. They are lost; it is impossible to recall them to memory. Cosette felt somewhat vexed at the useless little effort which her memory made. She said to herself that it was very wrong and very wicked of her to forget any words uttered by Marius.

She left her bed, and performed the two ablutions of soul and body,— her prayers and her toilet.

One may, if absolutely necessary, introduce a reader into a nuptial chamber, but not into a virgin's room. Verse could scarcely venture it; prose durst not do so.

It is the interior of a still closed flower; it is whiteness in the gloaming, the inner cell of the lily-bud, which must not be seen by man till it has been seen by the sun. Woman in the bud is sacred. That innocent bed which is disclosed,

that adorable semi-nudity which is afraid of itself, that white foot which takes refuge in a slipper, that throat which veils itself before a mirror as if the mirror were an eye, that chemise which hurriedly rises and hides the shoulder at the sound of a creaking piece of furniture or a passing vehicle, those knotted strings, those clasps fastened, that stay-lace drawn, those tremors, those shudders of cold and shame, that exquisite shyness of every movement, that almost winged anxiety where there is nothing to fear, the successive phases of dressing, as charming as the clouds of dawn,— it is not fitting that all this should be described, and it is too much to have even indicated it.

The eye of man must be yet more religious before the rising of a maiden than before the rising of a star. The possibility of injury should lead to increased respect. The down on the peach, the bloom on the plum, the starry crystal of the snow, the butterfly's wing powdered with feathers, are but coarse things compared to this chastity, which does not even know that it is chaste. The maiden is only the flash of a dream, and is not yet a statue. Her chamber is hidden in the shadowy part of the ideal. The indiscreet touch of a look brutalizes this vague, transparent penumbra. In such a case, contemplation is profanation.

We will therefore say nothing of the sweet little bustle and stir of Cosette's awakening.

An Eastern fable tells us that the rose was made white by God, but that Adam having looked at it as it was opening, it felt ashamed and turned red. We are of those who feel abashed in the presence of maidens and flowers, for we think them worthy of veneration.

Cosette dressed herself very rapidly, combed and dressed her hair, which was a very simple matter at that day, when women did not swell their ringlets and plaits with cushions and pads, and placed no crinoline in their hair; then she opened her window and looked all around, hoping to see some part of the street, a corner of the house, a bit of the pavement, so that she might watch for Marius there. But noth-

ing could be seen of the outside. The courtyard was surrounded by rather lofty walls, and was bounded by other gardens. Cosette declared those gardens hideous; for the first time in her life, she considered flowers ugly. The paltriest street gutter would have suited her purpose better. She resolved to look up to heaven, as if she thought that Marius might possibly come thence.

Suddenly she burst into tears. Not through any fickleness of temperament; her situation consisted of hopes dashed with despondency. She was confusedly conscious of something horrible. In truth, things are in the air. She said to herself that she was sure of nothing, that to take herself out of sight was to be lost; and the idea that Marius might return to her from heaven appeared to her no longer charming, but lugubrious.

Then — for such these clouds are — calmness returned, and hope and a sort of unconscious smile, which trusted in God, however.

Everybody was still asleep in the house. A provincial silence prevailed. Not a shutter was open. The porter's lodge was still closed. Toussaint was not up, and Cosette naturally thought that her father was asleep. She must have suffered greatly, and must still be suffering, for she said to herself that her father had been unkind; but she reckoned on Marius. The eclipse of such a light was clearly impossible. At intervals she heard, some distance off, a sort of heavy shock; and she thought how singular it was that doors should be opened and shut at so early an hour. It was the cannon-balls battering the barricade.

There was a martin's nest a few feet below Cosette's window in the old smoke-blackened cornice; the mouth of the projected a little beyond the cornice, so that the interior of this little paradise could be seen from above. The mother was there, spreading her wings like a fan over her brood. The father bird fluttered round, flew away, and then returned, bringing in his bill food and kisses. The rising day gilded this happy thing; the great law, "In-

crease and multiply," was there fulfilled, smiling and august, and the sweet mystery was unfolded in the glory of the morn. Cosette, with her hair in the sunshine, her soul filled with chimeras, illumined by love within and the dawn without, bent forward mechanically; and, almost without daring to confess to herself that she was thinking at the same time of Marius, she began to gaze at these birds, this family, this male and female, this mother and her little ones, with all the profound trouble which the sight of a nest occasions a virgin.

CHAPTER XI

THE SHOT WHICH MISSES NOTHING AND KILLS NOBODY

THE fire of the assailants continued. Musketry and grape-shot alternated, though without doing much harm. The upper part of Corinth alone suffered; the first floor and garret windows, riddled by shot and shell, gradually lost their shape. The combatants posted there were compelled to withdraw. However, such are the tactics of an attack on a barricade; to skirmish for a long time, in order to exhaust the ammunition of the insurgents, if they commit the error of returning the fire. When it is discovered, by the slackening of their fire, that they have no powder or ball left, the assault is made. Enjolras did not fall into this trap; the barricade did not reply.

At each platoon fire, Gavroche thrust his tongue into his cheek,— a sign of supreme disdain.

"That's good," he said; "tear up the cloth. We want lint."

Courfeyrac reproached the grape-shot for its want of effect, and said to the cannon:—

"You grow diffuse, my good fellow."

A battle may have its mysteries as well as a ball. It is

probable that this silence of the redoubt was beginning to make the assailants uneasy, and led them to fear lest some unexpected incident had occurred. They felt the need of getting a clear view through that pile of paving-stones, and of knowing what was going on behind that impassive wall, which received shots without returning them. The insurgents suddenly perceived a helmet glistening in the sun upon an adjoining roof. A sapper was leaning against a tall chimney-pot and apparently acting as sentry there. He looked directly down into the barricade.

"That's a troublesome overseer," said Enjolras.

Jean had returned Enjolras his fowling-piece, but still had his own musket.

Without a word, he aimed at the sapper, and a second later, the helmet, struck by a bullet, fell noisily into the street. The terrified soldier disappeared with all possible haste. A second observer took his place. This one was an officer. Jean Valjean, who had reloaded his musket, aimed at the newcomer, and sent the officer's helmet to join the private's. The officer was not obstinate, but withdrew quickly. This time the hint was understood. No one again appeared on the roof, and the attempt to spy on the barricade was renounced.

"Why did you not kill the man?" Bossuet asked Jean Valjean.

Jean Valjean made no reply.

CHAPTER XII

DISORDER THE PARTISAN OF ORDER

BOSSUET muttered in Combeferre's ear: —

"He has not answered my question."

"He is a man who does kind actions with musket-shots," said Combeferre.

Those who have any recollection of this now distant epoch know that the suburban National Guards were valiant against insurrections. They were peculiarly brave and zealous in the days of June, 1832. A certain worthy landlord whose "establishment" the riots closed, became leonine on seeing his dance-hall deserted, and let himself be killed in order to preserve order as represented by the bar. At this time, which was at once heroic and commonplace, in the presence of ideas which had their knights, interests had their paladins. The prosiness of the motive took away none of the bravery of the movement. The decrease of a pile of crowns made bankers sing the "Marseillaise." Men shed their blood lyrically for the till. They defended the shop, that immense diminutive of the country, with Lacedæmonian enthusiasm.

Altogether, there was a good deal that was very serious in all this. Social elements were entering into contest, while awaiting the day when they should enter a state of equilibrium.

Another sign of the times was the anarchy mingled with governmentalism (the barbarous term for the orthodox party). Men were for order without discipline. The drum beat unexpectedly, at the command of any colonel of the National Guard; one captain went under fire through inspiration; some National Guards fought "for an idea," and on their own account. At critical moments on "the days," men took counsel less with their chiefs than with their own instincts. There were in the army of order, real guerrilleros,— some of the sword, like Fannicot, and others of the pen, like Henri Fonfrède.

Civilization, unhappily represented at this period rather by an aggregation of interests than by a group of principles, was, or believed itself to be, in danger; it sounded the alarm. Every man, constituting himself a centre, defended, succoured and protected it in his own way; and the first-comer took upon himself to save society.

Zeal sometimes extended to extermination. A platoon of National Guards constituted themselves, on their own au-

thority, a council of war, and tried and executed an insurgent prisoner in five minutes. It was an improvisation of this nature which killed Jean Prouvaire. It is that ferocious lynch-law with which no one party has a right to reproach the others, for it has been applied by the republic in America as well as by monarchy in Europe. This lynch-law was complicated by mistakes. On a day of riot a young poet, named Paul Aimé Garnier, was pursued on the Place Royale, at the bayonet's point, and only escaped by taking shelter under the gate-way at No. 6. "There's another of those St. Simonians!" they shouted; and they wished to kill him. Now, he had under his arm a volume of the Memoirs of the Duke de Saint Simon. A National Guard had read the words "Saint Simon," on the back and shouted, "Death to him!"

On June 6, 1832, a company of National Guards from the suburbs, commanded by Captain Fannicot, to whom we have already referred, was decimated in the Rue de la Chanvrerie, of their own good will and pleasure. This fact, singular though it is, was proved by the judicial report drawn up in consequence of the insurrection of 1832. Captain Fannicot, an impatient and bold fellow, a sort of *condottiere* of the order which we have just described, a fanatical and intractable governmentalist, could not resist the temptation to fire prematurely, and the ambition of taking the barricade unaided, — that is to say, with his company. Exasperated by the successive apparition of the red flag and the old coat, which he took for the black flag, he loudly blamed the generals and commanders of corps, who were holding councils, and did not think the moment for decisive assault had arrived, but "let the insurrection cook in its own gravy," according to the famous expression of one of them. As for him, he thought the barricade ripe; and as everything that is ripe is bound to fall, he made the attempt.

He commanded men as resolute as himself. "Mad-men," a witness called them. His company — the same which had shot Jean Prouvaire, the poet,— was the first of the battalion posted at the street corner. At the moment when it was

least expected, the captain dashed his men at the barricade. This movement, executed with more good-will than strategy, cost Fannicot's company dear. Before it had covered two-thirds of the street, a general discharge from the barricade greeted it. Four, the boldest men of all, running at the head, were shot down in point-blank range at the very foot of the redoubt; and this courageous mob of National Guards, very brave men, but not possessing military tenacity, was compelled to fall back after some hesitation, leaving fifteen corpses on the pavement. The momentary hesitation gave the insurgents time to reload their guns; and a second and most deadly discharge assailed the company before the men could regain their shelter at the corner of the street. In a moment they were caught between two fires, and received the volley from the cannon, which, having no orders to the contrary, did not cease firing. The intrepid and imprudent Fannicot was one of those killed by this round of grape-shot. He was laid low by the cannon,— that is to say, by order.

This attack, which was more furious than serious, enraged Enjolras.

"The asses!" he said. "They are killing their own men and spending our ammunition for nothing."

Enjolras spoke like the true general of a riot that he was. Insurrection and repression do not fight with equal arms. Insurrection, which is soon exhausted, has only a certain number of rounds to fire and of combatants to expend. An empty cartridge-box, a dead man, cannot be replaced. Repression, on the other hand, having the army, does not count its men, and having Vincennes, does not count its rounds. Repression has as many regiments as the barricade has men, and as many arsenals as the barricade has cartridge-boxes. Hence these are contests of one man against a hundred, which always end by the destruction of the barricade, unless revolution, suddenly rising up, casts into the balance its flashing archangel's sword. Such things happen. Then everything rises, paving-stones begin to seethe, popular redoubts swarm. Paris shudders supremely; the *quid divinum*

is evolved; August 10 or July 29 is in the air; a prodigious light appears; the yawning throat of force shrinks back, and the army, that lion, sees before it, erect and tranquil, that prophet, France.

CHAPTER XIII

PASSING GLEAMS

IN the chaos of feelings and passions which defend a barricade, there is a little of everything,— bravery, youth, the point of honour, enthusiasm, the ideal, conviction, the rage of the gambler, and, above all, intermittent gleams of hope.

One of these intermittent gleams, one of these vague quiverings of hope, suddenly ran along the Chanvrerie barricade at the most unexpected moment.

"Listen!" exclaimed Enjolras, who was ever on the watch; "it seems to me that Paris is waking up."

It is certain that, on the morning of June 6, the insurrection had for an hour or two a certain renewed vigour. The obstinacy of the alarm-bell of St. Merry aroused a few fancies. Barricades were begun in the Rue de Poirier and in the Rue de Gravilliers. In front of the Porte St. Martin, a young man armed with a gun, attacked a squadron of cavalry. Alone, unprotected, and on the open boulevard, he knelt down, raised his gun, fired, killed the leader of the squadron, and then turned away, saying: "There's another who will do us no more mischief." He was cut down. In the Rue St. Denis, a woman fired at the National Guard from behind a Venetian blind. The wooden slats trembled at every shot. A boy of fourteen was arrested in the Rue de la Cossonnerie, with his pockets full of cartridges. Several guard-houses were attacked. At the entrance to the Rue Bertin-Poirée a very sharp and quite unexpected fusillade

greeted a regiment of cuirassiers, at whose head rode General Cavaignac de Baragne. In the Rue Planche Mibray, old crockery and household utensils were thrown from the roofs upon the troops: this was a bad sign; and when Marshal Soult was informed of the fact, Napoleon's old lieutenant became pensive, for he remembered Suchet's remark at Saragossa: "We are lost when old women empty their pots on our heads." These general symptoms manifested at a moment when the riots were supposed to be localized, this fever of anger which regained the upper hand, these will-o'-the-wisps flying here and there over those deep masses of combustible matter which are called the faubourgs of Paris,— all this, taken together, alarmed the leaders. They hastened to extinguish the first outbreak of the fire.

Until these sparks were quenched, the attacks on the barricades Maubuée, de la Chanvrerie, and St. Merry were deferred, so that they might have to deal with nothing but the barricades, and might finish all at one blow. Columns of troops were sent through the riotous streets, sweeping the large streets and probing the smaller ones, on the right and on the left, at one moment slowly and cautiously, at another at a quick march. The troops broke open the doors of houses whence there had been shots; at the same time, cavalry manœuvres dispersed the groups on the boulevards. This repression was not affected without turmoil, and without that tumultuous noise peculiar to collisions between the army and the people.

It was this that had attracted Enjolras's attention in the intervals between the cannonading and the platoon fire. Moreover, he had seen wounded men carried past the end of the street on litters, and he said to Courfeyrac:

"Those wounded do not belong to us."

Their hope lasted but a short time; the gleam was quickly eclipsed. In less than half an hour what was in the air vanished.

It was like a flash of lightning without thunder; and the insurgents felt that leaden pall, which the indifference

of the people casts over abandoned and obstinate men, fall over them once more.

The general movement, which seemed to have been obscurely designed, failed; and the attention of the minister of war and the strategy of the generals could now be concentrated on the three or four barricades that remained standing.

The sun rose on the horizon, and an insurgent addressed Enjolras: —

"We are hungry here. Are we really to die like this, without eating?"

Enjolras, still leaning on his parapet, nodded without taking his eyes off the end of the street.

CHAPTER XIV

WHERE WE READ THE NAME OF THE MISTRESS OF ENJOLRAS

COURFEYRAC, seated on a stone by the side of Enjolras, continued to insult the cannon; and each time that the gloomy shower of projectiles called grape-shot passed with its monstrous noise, he greeted it with a burst of irony.

"You waste your breath, my old poor brute. I feel sorry for you; your row is thrown away. That is not thunder; that's a cough."

And those around him laughed.

Courfeyrac and Bossuet, whose valiant good-humor increased with danger, made up for want of food, like Madame Scarron, with jests; and as wine was short, they poured out gayety for all.

"I admire Enjolras," said Bossuet. "His temerity amazes me. He lives alone, which, perhaps, renders him a little sad; Enjolras complains of his greatness which binds him to widowhood. We fellows have all, more or less, mis-

tresses, who drive us mad,— that is to say, make us brave. When a man is as much in love as a tiger, the least he can do is to fight like a lion. That is one way of avenging ourselves for the tricks which our girls play us. Roland gets killed to plague Angelica; all our heroism comes from our women. A man without a woman is like a pistol without a trigger; it is the woman who makes the man go off. Well, Enjolras has no woman. He is not in love, and yet he finds means to be intrepid. It is extraordinary that a man can be as cold as ice and as bold as fire."

Enjolras did not appear to listen; but any one who stood near him might have heard him murmur, in a low voice: "Patria."

Bossuet was still laughing, when Courfeyrac shouted:

"Here's something fresh."

And assuming the tone of a groom of the chambers announcing a visitor, he added:—

"Mr. Eight-pounder."

In fact, a new character had come upon the stage. It was a second piece of artillery.

The gunners rapidly got it into position in line with the first. This was the beginning of the end.

A few minutes later, both guns, actively served, were at work against the barricade; the platoon fire of the line and the soldiers from the suburbs supported the artillery.

Another cannonade was audible some distance off. At the same time that the two guns furiously assaulted the redoubt in the Rue de la Chanvrerie, two other pieces placed in position, one in the Rue St. Denis, the other in the Rue Aubrey-le-Boucher, were riddling the St. Merry barricade. The four guns echoed each other mournfully. The barking of these grim dogs of war responded to each other.

Of the two guns now pounding the barricade in the Rue de la Chanvrerie, one fired shell and the other solid shot. The gun which fired shot was pointed a little high, and the aim was so calculated that the ball struck the extreme edge of the topmost crest of the barricade, shot away fragments, and

crumbled the paving-stones on the heads of the insurgents, amid bursts of grape-shot. This mode of firing was intended to drive the combatants from the top of the redoubt, and to compel them to close up in the interior,— that is to say, it announced the assault. The combatants once driven from the top of the barricade by shot, and from the windows of the public-house by canister, the attacking columns might venture into the street without being picked off, perhaps without even being seen, might suddenly scale the redoubt, as on the previous evening, and, who knows? take it by surprise.

"We must absolutely reduce the annoyance of those guns," said Enjolras; and he shouted: "Fire at the artillery-men."

All were ready. The barricade, which had so long been silent, was belted with flame; seven or eight rounds succeeded each other with a sort of rage and joy. The street was filled with blinding smoke, and in a few minutes, through the mist, all streaked with flame, two-thirds of the artillery-men were vaguely seen lying under the gun-wheels. Those who remained standing continued to serve the guns with stern tranquillity, but the firing was slackened.

"Things are going well," said Bossuet to Enjolras. "Success!"

Enjolras shook his head, and replied: —

"Another quarter of an hour of such success and there will not be a dozen cartridges left in the barricade."

It appears that Gavroche heard this remark.

CHAPTER XV

GAVROCHE OUTSIDE

COURFEYRAC all at once perceived somebody in the street, at the foot of the barricade, amid the shower of bullets.

Gavroche had fetched a hamper from the pot-house, passed

through the gap, and was quietly engaged in emptying into his basket the full cartridge-boxes of the National Guards killed on the slope of the redoubt.

"What are you doing there?" said Courfeyrac.

Gavroche looked up:—

"Citizen, I am filling my hamper."

"Do you not see the grape-shot?"

Gavroche replied: "Well, it is raining. What then?"

Courfeyrac cried: "Come in!"

"Directly," said Gavroche. And with one bound he was in the street.

It will be borne in mind that Fannicot's company, in retreating, left behind it a trail of corpses. Some twenty dead bodies lay here and there on the pavement all along the street.

Twenty cartridge-boxes for Gavroche, and a stock of cartridges for the barricade.

The smoke lay in the street like a fog. Any one who has seen a cloud in a mountain gorge, between two steep cliffs, can form an idea of this smoke, compressed, and, as it were, condensed by two dark lines of tall houses. It rose slowly, and was incessantly renewed, whence came a gradual obscurity, which dimmed even broad daylight. The combatants could scarcely see each other from one end of the street to the other, short as it was.

This darkness, probably desired and calculated on by the leaders who were to direct the assault on the barricade, was useful to Gavroche. Under the cloak of the smoke, and thanks to his small size, he was enabled to advance a considerable distance along the street unnoticed. He plundered the first seven or eight cartridge-boxes without any great danger.

He crawled flat on his stomach, galloped on all-fours, took his hamper in his teeth, writhed, glided, undulated, wound from one corpse to another and emptied the cartridge-box as a monkey opens a nut.

No one shouted to him from the barricade, which was still

quite close, to return, for fear of attracting attention to him. On one corpse, that of a corporal, he found a powder-flask.

"For thirst," he said, as he put it in his pocket.

By dint of moving forward, he at length reached a point where the fog of the fire became transparent. The sharp-shooters of the line drawn up on the alert behind their parapet of paving-stones, and the sharp-shooters from the suburbs massed at the corner of the street, all at once pointed out to each other something stirring in the smoke.

At the moment when Gavroche was relieving a sergeant lying near a post of his cartridges, a bullet struck the corpse.

"Oh, for shame!" said Gavroche; "they are killing my dead for me."

A second bullet struck a spark from the paving-stones close to him. A third upset his hamper.

Gavroche looked and saw that it came from the National Guards. He sprang up, his hair floating in the breeze, his hands on his hips, his eyes fixed on the National Guards who were firing, and he sang:—

"You are ugly at Nanterre;
'Tis the fault of Voltaire.
And dull at Palaisseau,
'Tis the fault of Rousseau."

Then he picked up his hamper, replaced the cartridges which had fallen from it, without missing one, and advancing toward the firing party, began to plunder another cartridge-box. There a fourth bullet again missed him. Gavroche sang:—

"For law I do not care;
'Tis the fault of Voltaire.
I am a careless crow;
'Tis the fault of Rousseau."

A fifth bullet only succeeded in drawing from him a third couplet:—

"Misery's my daily wear;
'Tis the fault of Voltaire.
I laugh where'er I go;
'Tis the fault of Rousseau."

Thus it went on for some time.

The sight was at once terrific and charming. Gavroche, while fired at, ridiculed the firing. He seemed to be greatly amused. He was like a sparrow pecking at the sportsmen. He answered each discharge by a couplet. The troops fired at him incessantly, and always missed him. The National Guards and the soldiers laughed as they took aim at him. He lay down, then rose again, hid himself in a doorway, then bounded forth, disappeared, re-appeared, took to his heels, came back, replied to the grape-shot with his thumb at his nose and all the while, stole cartridges, emptied cartridge-boxes, and filled his hamper. The insurgents, panting with anxiety, followed him with their eyes. While the barricade trembled, he sang. He was not a child, he was not a man; he was a strange goblin imp. He seemed like the invulnerable dwarf of the combat. The bullets chased him, but he was more nimble than they. He played a frightful game of hide-and-seek with death. Every time that the snub-nosed face of the spectre approached, the gutter-snipe gave it a fillip.

One bullet, however, better aimed or more treacherous than the others, at length struck the will-o'-the-wisp lad. Gavroche was seen to totter and then sink. The whole barricade uttered a cry. But there was an Antæus in that pygmy; for a gutter-snipe to touch the pavement is the same as for a giant to touch the earth. Gavroche had only fallen to rise again. He remained in a sitting posture, a long stream of blood ran down his face, he raised both arms in the air, looked in the direction whence the shot had come, and began to sing:—

"I've fallen flat, I swear;
'Tis the fault of Voltaire.
My nose in the gutter, oh, ho!
'Tis the fault of —"

He did not finish. A second shot from the same marksman stopped him short. This time he fell face downward on the pavement, and moved no more. That great little soul had fled away.

CHAPTER XVI

HOW A BROTHER BECOMES A FATHER

AT this very same moment, in the Luxembourg garden,—for the eye of the drama must be everywhere present,—two children were holding each other by the hand. One might have been seven years old, the other five. As they were wet through with the rain, they walked along sunshiny paths. The elder led the younger; both were in rags and pale. They looked like wild birds. The younger said: "I am very hungry."

The elder, who had already a protecting air, led his brother with the left hand, and had a switch in his right.

They were alone in the garden, which was deserted, as the gates were closed by police order, on account of the insurrection. The troops who had bivouacked there had issued forth for the exigencies of the combat.

How came those children there? Perhaps they had escaped from some guard-room where the door was left ajar; perhaps in the vicinity, at the Barrière, l'Enfer, on the esplanade of the observatory, or at the neighbouring cross-roads overshadowed by the cornice, on which may be read, "Invenerunt parvulum pannis involutum," there was some mountebank's booth from which they had fled; perhaps they had on the previous evening evaded the eye of the keepers of the garden at the hour of closing, and had spent the night in one of those sentry-boxes where people read the papers. The fact is, that they were wandering about and seemed to be free. To be a wanderer, and to appear free, is to be lost. These poor little creatures were indeed lost.

These two children were the same concerning whom Gavroche had been so troubled, as the reader will remember. Sons of Thénardier let out to Magnon, attributed to M. Gillenormand, and now leaves fallen from all these rootless branches, and rolled along the ground by the wind.

Their clothes, clean in the time of Magnon, and which served her as a prospectus to M. Gillenormand, had become rags.

These beings henceforth belonged to the statistics of "abandoned children," whom the police pick up, take note of, lose, and find again on the pavements of Paris.

It needed the confusion of such a day as this for these two poor little wretches to be in this garden. If the keepers had noticed them, they would have driven out those rags. Poor little lads do not enter public gardens; yet we should remember that, as children, they have a right to flowers.

They were there, thanks to the locked gates. They were there contrary to rules. They had slipped into the garden and remained there. Though locked gates do not give a holiday to the keepers, and their watch is supposed to continue, it slackens and takes a rest; and the keepers, also affected by public alarms, and more busied about the outside than the inside, did not look at the garden, and had not seen the two delinquents.

It had rained on the previous evening, and even slightly in the morning. But in June, showers are of no great consequence. People hardly perceive, an hour after a storm, that the bright and beauteous day has wept. The earth in summer dries as rapidly as a child's cheek.

At this period of the solstice the full light of noon is, so to speak, all pervasive. It seizes everything. It clings to and spreads itself over the earth with a sort of suction. We might say that the sun is thirsty. A shower is a glass of water; a rain-storm is at once drunk up. In the morning everything was dripping; in the afternoon everything is dusty.

Nothing is so worthy of admiration as verdure washed

by the rain and dried by the sun; it is warm freshness. Gardens and fields, having water at their roots and sunshine on their flowers, become censers of incense, and steam with all their perfumes at once. Everything laughs, sings, and offers itself. We feel a sweet intoxication. Spring is a temporary paradise; the sun helps man to be patient.

There are beings who ask no more,— living creatures who, having the blue of heaven, say: "It is enough;" dreamers absorbed in the marvel, drawing from the idolatry of Nature indifference to good and evil, contemplators of the Cosmos, radiantly forgetful of man, who do not understand how people can trouble themselves about the hunger of one person, the thirst of another, the nudity of the poor man in winter, the lymphatic curvature of a small backbone, the truckle bed, the garret, the cell, and the rags of shivering young girls, when they can dream under the trees,— peaceful and terrible souls, pitilessly satisfied. Strange to say, infinitude suffices them. They ignore that great want of man, the finite, which admits of an embrace. They do not dream of the finite which admits of progress,— sublime toil. The indefinite, which springs from the divine and human combination of the infinite and the finite, escapes them. Provided that they can be face to face with immensity, they smile. They never feel joy, but always ecstasy. Their life is one of abstraction. The history of humanity is to them but a detail. All is not there; the true All lies outside.— Why trouble one's self about that item, man? Man suffers, it is possible; but just look at Aldebaran rising!— The mother has no milk, the new-born babe is dying. I know nothing of all that; but just look at this marvellous rosette made by a slice of hawthorn stem, seen through a microscope! Just compare the finest Mechlin lace with that!— These thinkers forget to love. The zodiac has such an attraction over them that it prevents their seeing the weeping child. God eclipses their souls. This is a class of minds at once great and small. Homer belonged to it, so did Goethe, and possibly La Fontaine,— magnificent egotists of the infinite,

calm spectators of sorrow, who do not see Nero if the weather be fine; from whom the sun hides the pyre; who would look on at a guillotining to seek for an effect of light; who hear neither cries nor sobs, nor the death-rattle, nor the tocsin; to whom everything is good, since there is a month of May; who so long as they have clouds of purple and gold above their heads declare themselves satisfied; and who are determined to be happy until the radiance of the stars and the song of the birds are exhausted.

These are dark radiances. They do not suspect that they are to be pitied, but they certainly are. The man who does not weep does not see. We must admire and pity them, as we would pity and admire a being at once night and day, who had no eyes under his brows, but a star in the centre of his forehead.

The indifference of these thinkers is, according to some, supreme philosophy. Be it so; but in this superiority there is infirmity. A man may be immortal and yet limp,— witness Vulcan. One may be more than man and less than man. There is immense incompleteness in Nature. Who knows whether the sun be not blind?

But in that case, whom are we to trust? "Solem quis dicere falsum audeat?" Thus, certain geniuses themselves, certain Very Lofty humans,— men-stars,— may be mistaken. That which is above, at the summit, at the zenith, which pours so much light on the earth, may see but little, see badly, see not at all. Is not this a desperate state of affairs? No. But what is there, then, above the sun? God.

On June 6, 1832, about eleven in the forenoon, the Luxembourg, solitary and depopulated, was delicious. The quincunxes and flower-beds sent balm and bewilderment into the sunlight. The branches, wild with the brilliancy of midday, seemed trying to embrace each other. There was in the sycamores a twittering of linnets, the sparrows were triumphant, and the woodpeckers crept along the chestnuts, giving little pecks to the holes in the bark. The flower-beds accepted the legitimate royalty of the lilies; the most august

of perfumes is that which issues from whiteness. The spicy odour of carnations filled the air. The old rooks of Marie de Medicis made love in the lofty trees. The sun gilded, crimsoned, and illumined the tulips, which are nothing but all the varieties of flame made into flowers. All around the tulip-beds hummed the bees,— the sparks of those flower-flames. All was grace and gayety, even the coming shower; that relapse, by which the lilies-of-the-valley and honeysuckles would profit, had nothing alarming about it. The swallows indulged in the delicious threat of flying low. Everything there breathed in happiness; life had a pleasant perfume; all Nature exhaled candour, help, assistance, paternity, caresses, and dawn. The thoughts that fell from heaven were as soft as a little child's hand when we kiss it.

The statues under the trees, white and bare, were robed in dresses of shadow shot with light; these goddesses were all ragged with sunshine. Rays hung from them on all sides. Around the great fountain the earth was already so dry as to be parched. There was sufficient breeze to create small riots of dust here and there. A few yellow leaves left over from last autumn, joyously pursued each other, and seemed to be sporting.

The abundance of light had something strangely reassuring about it. Life, sap, heat, and odours overflowed. The immensity of the source was perceptible beneath creation. In all these blasts, permeated with love, in these changing reflections and reverberations, in this lavish expenditure of rays, in this indefinite outpouring of liquid gold, the prodigality of the inexhaustible was felt; and behind this splendour, as behind a curtain of flame, glimpses of God, that millionaire of stars, were caught.

Thanks to the sand, there was not a speck of mud; thanks to the rain, there was not a grain of dust. The blossoms had just been bathed; and all the velvets, all the satins, all the varnish, and all the gold which issue from the earth in the shape of flowers, were irreproachable. This magnificence was free from stain. The grand silence of happy Na-

ture filled the garden,— a heavenly silence, compatible with a thousand strains of music, the cooing from the nests, the buzzing of swarms, and the flutter of the wind. The whole harmony of the season was blended into a gracious whole,— the entrances and exits of spring took place in the desired order; the lilacs were ending and the jessamine beginning; a few flowers were behindhand; a few insects before their time; the vanguard of the red butterflies of June fraternized with the rear-guard of the white butterflies of May; the plane-trees were putting on a fresh skin; the breeze made waves in the magnificent enormity of the chestnut-trees. It was splendid. A veteran from the adjoining barracks, who was looking through the railings, said: "Spring is presenting arms, in full-dress uniform."

All Nature was breakfasting; creation was at table. It was the hour. The great blue cloth was laid in heaven, and the great green cloth on earth. The sun shone brightly. God was serving the universal meal. Every being had its pasture or its pasty. The wood-pigeon found hemp-seed, the greenfinch found millet, the goldfinch found chickweed, the red breast found worms, the bee found flowers, the fly found infusoria, and the swallow found flies. They certainly devoured each other to some extent, which is the mystery of evil mingled with good; but not one of them all had an empty stomach.

The two poor abandoned boys had reached the great fountain, and somewhat confused by all this light, they tried to hide,— the instinct of the poor and the weak in the presence of magnificence, even when it is impersonal,— and they kept behind the swans' house.

Now and then at intervals, when the wind blew, confused shouts, a dull roar, a sort of noisy death-rattle, which was musketry, and dull blows, which were cannon-shots, could be heard. There was smoke above the roofs in the direction of the Markets. A bell, which seemed to be calling, rang in the distance.

The children did not seem to notice the noises. The lit-

tle one repeated every now and then, in a low voice: "I am hungry."

Almost simultaneously with the two boys, another couple approached the basin,— a man about fifty, leading by the hand a boy of six. It was doubtless a father with his son. The little man of six had a big cake.

At this period certain houses adjoining the river, in the Rue Madame and the Rue d'Enfer, had keys to the Luxembourg garden, by which the lodgers could let themselves in when the gates were locked; but this permission has since been withdrawn. This father and son evidently came from one of these houses.

The two poor little creatures saw "this gentleman" coming and hid themselves a little more.

He was a tradesman. Perhaps the same whom Marius, through his love-fever, one day heard near the same great basin, counselling his son "to avoid excesses." He had an affable and haughty air, and a mouth, which, as it did not close, always smiled. This mechanical smile, produced by too much jaw and too little skin, shows the teeth rather than the soul.

The boy with his cake, which he had bitten but not finished, seemed uncomfortably full. The boy was dressed in a National Guard's uniform, on account of the riots, and the father remained in civilian garb for the sake of prudence.

Father and son halted near the great basin, in which the two swans were disporting. This tradesman seemed to have a special admiration for the swans. He resembled them, in that he walked like them.

For the moment the swans were swimming, which is their principal talent, and they were superb.

Had the two poor little fellows listened, and been of an age to comprehend, they might have overheard the remarks of a serious man. The father said to his son: "The sage lives content with little. Look at me, my son. I do not care for luxury. You never see me in a coat glisten-

ing with gold and precious stones. I leave that false lustre to badly organized minds."

Here the deep shout which came from the direction of the Markets broke out, with redoubled bells and noise.

"What is that?" asked the lad.

The father replied:—

"That is the Saturnalia."

All at once he perceived the two ragged little boys standing motionless behind the green-painted house of the swans.

"There is the beginning," said he. And, after a pause, he added: "Anarchy has entered this garden."

Meantime, the boy bit his cake, spat it out again, and suddenly began to cry.

"Why are you crying?" asked the father.

"I am not hungry," said the boy.

The father's smile became more marked than ever.

"You need not be hungry to eat a cake."

"I am tired of cake. It is dry."

"Don't you want any more?"

"No."

The father showed him the swans.

"Throw it to those palmipeds."

The boy hesitated. If he did not want any more cake, that was no reason for giving it away.

The father continued:—

"Be humane. You ought to be kind to animals." And, taking the cake from his son, he threw it into the basin.

It fell quite near the bank. The swans were some distance off, at the centre of the basin, engaged with some prey. They had seen neither the man nor the cake.

The man, feeling that the cake ran a risk of being lost, and moved by this useless shipwreck, began a telegraphic agitation, which eventually attracted the attention of the swans.

They saw something floating on the surface, tacked, like the vessels that they are, and came toward the cake slowly, with the majesty that befits white creatures.

"Swans [1] understand signs," [2] said the tradesman, pleased at his own cleverness.

At this moment the distant tumult of the city was again suddenly increased. This time it was sinister. Some blasts of wind speak more distinctly than others. The one which blew at this moment distinctly brought on its wings the roll of drums, shouts, platoon fires, and the mournful replies of the tocsin and the cannon. This coincided with a black cloud which suddenly veiled the sun.

The swans had not yet reached the cake.

"Let us go home," said the father; "they are attacking the Tuileries."

He seized his son's hand again. Then he continued:

"From the Tuileries to the Luxembourg there is only the distance which separates royalty from the peerage; that is not far. It is going to rain musketry." He looked at the cloud. "And perhaps we shall have rain of another sort, too. Heaven is joining in. The younger branch is condemned. Let us make haste home."

"I should like to see the swans eat the cake," said the boy.

"That would be imprudent," answered the father. And he led away his little tradesman.

The son, regretting the swans, turned his head toward the basin, until an elbow of the quincunxes concealed it from him.

Meanwhile, the two little vagabonds had approached the cake at the same time as the swans. It was floating on the water. The smaller boy looked at the cake. The other looked at the retreating tradesman.

Father and son entered the labyrinth of paths that lead to the grand staircase by the clump of trees in the direction of the Rue Madame.

When they were no longer in sight, the elder boy hurriedly lay down flat on his stomach on the rounding edge of the basin, and, holding to it with his left hand, bending over

[1] Cygnes. [2] Signes.

the water till he all but fell in, he stretched out his switch toward the cake with the other hand. The swans, seeing the enemy, hastened up; and as they hastened, their breasts produced an effect favourable to the little fisher. The water flowed back in front of the swans, and one of these gentle, concentric waves softly impelled the cake toward the boy's switch. When the swans reached it, the stick touched the cake. The lad gave a quick blow, startled the swans, seized the cake, and sprang up. The cake was soaked; but they were hungry and thirsty. The elder boy divided the cake into two parts,— a large one and a small one,— kept the small one for himself, and gave the larger piece to his brother, saying:—

"Shove that into your bread-basket."

CHAPTER XVII

MORTUUS PATER FILIUM MORITURUM EXPECTAT

MARIUS rushed out of the barricade. Combeferre followed him. But it was too late. Gavroche was dead. Combeferre brought in the basket of cartridges. Marius carried the boy.

Alas! he thought, he was returning to the son what the father had done for his father,— only Thénardier had brought his father back alive. He brought the boy back dead.

When Marius re-entered the redoubt with Gavroche in his arms, his face was bathed with blood, like the boy's face.

At the instant when he stooped to pick up Gavroche, a bullet had grazed his skull; he had not noticed it.

Courfeyrac took off his neckcloth and bound Marius's forehead.

Gavroche was laid on the same table with Mabœuf, and

the black shawl was spread over both bodies. It was large enough for the old man and the child.

Combeferre distributed the cartridges which he had brought in. This gave each man fifteen rounds to fire.

Jean Valjean was still in the same place, motionless on his stone post. When Combeferre offered him his fifteen cartridges, he shook his head.

"That is a strange eccentric," said Combeferre, in a low voice to Enjolras. "He manages not to fight inside this barricade."

"Which does not prevent him from defending it," answered Enjolras.

"Heroism has its originals," resumed Combeferre.

And Courfeyrac, who overheard him, said:—

"He is a different sort from Father Mabœuf."

It is a thing worth mentioning, that the fire which struck the barricade scarcely disturbed the interior. Those who have never passed through the tornado of a warfare of this nature can form no idea of the singular moments of calm mingled with these convulsions. Men come and go; they talk, they jest, they idle. A friend of ours heard a combatant say to him, in the midst of the grape-shot: "This is like being at a bachelor's breakfast." The redoubt in the Rue de la Chanvrerie, we repeat, seemed very calm within. All changes and all phases were, or would shortly be, exhausted. From critical, the position had become menacing, and from menacing was probably about to become desperate. In proportion as the situation grew darker, a heroic light reddened the barricade more and more. Enjolras, who was grave, commanded it, in the attitude of a young Spartan, vowing his naked sword to the sombre genius, Epidotas.

Combeferre, an apron tied round his waist, was dressing the wounded. Bossuet and Feuilly were making cartridges with the powder-flask found by Gavroche on the dead corporal, and Bossuet was saying to Feuilly: "We shall soon take the stage-coach for another planet." Courfeyrac, seated on a few paving-stones which he had reserved for himself

near Enjolras, was preparing and arranging an entire arsenal,— his sword-cane, his gun, two holster-pistols, and a club,— with the minute care of a girl setting a small lace frill in order. Jean Valjean was silently staring at the opposite wall. A workman was fastening Mother Hucheloup's broad-brimmed straw bonnet on his head, with a piece of string, "for fear of sun-stroke," as he said. The young men of the Aix Cougourde were gayly chatting together, as if anxious to talk their native dialect for the last time. Joly, who had taken down Widow Hucheloup's mirror, was examining his tongue in it. A few combatants, who had discovered some mouldy crusts of bread in a drawer, were eating them greedily. Marius was anxious about what his father would say to him.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE VULTURE BECOMES THE VICTIM

WE must lay stress upon a psychological fact peculiar to barricades. Nothing which characterizes this surprising war of the streets should be omitted.

Whatever the strange inward tranquillity to which we have just referred may be, the barricade does not the less remain a vision for those who are inside it.

There is something of an apocalypse in civil war. All the mists of the unknown world are mingled with those fierce flashes. Revolutions are sphinxes, and any one who has stood behind a barricade believes that he has gone through a dream.

What is felt in these plots we have shown in the matter of Marius, and we shall see the consequences thereof. It is more and it is less than life. On leaving a barricade, a man no longer knows what he has seen there. He may have been

terrible, but he is ignorant of the fact. He has been surrounded there by conflicting ideas which possessed human faces; he has seen them in the light of futurity. There were corpses laid low, and phantoms standing upright. The hours were colossal, and seemed hours of eternity. Such a man has lived in death. Shadows have passed him by. What was it? He has seen hands on which there was blood. There war a deafening din, but at the same time a startling silence; there were open mouths that cried, and other open mouths which were silent, and men were surrounded by smoke, perhaps by night. He fancied he had touched the sinister ooze of unknown depths; he stares at something red on his nails. He no longer recollects anything.

Let us return to the Rue de la Chanvrerie.

Suddenly, between two discharges, the distant sound of a clock striking the hour was heard.

"It is midday," said Combeferre.

The twelve strokes had not died out when Enjolras drew himself up to his full height, and from the top of the barricade hurled the loud cry:—

"Take paving-stones into the house. Line the window-ledges with them. Half the men to the stones, the other half to their guns. There is not a moment to lose."

A party of sappers and miners, axe on shoulder, had just appeared in battle array at the end of the street.

This could only be the head of a column; and of what column? Evidently, the attacking column. The sappers and miners ordered to demolish the barricade always precede the troops told off to scale it.

It was plain that they were on the verge of that moment which M. Clermont-Tonnerre called in 1822, "the tug of war."

Enjolras's order was carried out with that correct haste peculiar to ships and barricades,— the only two battle-fields whence escape is impossible. In less than a minute two-thirds of the paving-stones which Enjolras had ordered to be piled up against the door of Corinth were carried to the

first-floor and attic; and before a second minute had passed, these paving-stones, artistically laid one on another, walled up the window on the first-floor and the windows in the roof to half their height. A few spaces, carefully arranged by Feuilly, the chief constructor, allowed the gun-barrels to pass through. This armament of the windows was the more easily effected because the grape-shot had ceased. The two cannon were now firing solid shot at the centre of the barricade, in order to make a hole, and, if possible, a breach for the assault.

When the stones intended for the final defence were in their place. Enjolras carried to the first-floor the bottles he had placed under the table on which Mabœuf lay.

"Who will drink that?" asked Bossuet.

"They will," answered Enjolras.

Then the ground-floor window was also barricaded and the iron cross bars which closed the door of the tavern at night were held in readiness.

The fortress was complete; the barricade was the rampart and the wine-shop the keep.

With the paving-stones left over, the exit was stopped up.

As the defenders of a barricade are always obliged to be sparing with their ammunition, and as the besiegers are aware of this fact, the latter make their arrangements with a sort of irritating leisure, expose themselves prematurely to the fire, though more apparently than in reality, and take their ease. The preparations for attack are always made with a certain methodical slowness; after that the thunder falls.

This slowness enabled Enjolras to revise and render everything perfect. He felt that since such men were about to die, their death must be a masterpiece.

He said to Marius:—

"We are the two chiefs. I will give the final orders inside. Do you remain outside and watch."

Marius posted himself on the alert on the crest of the barricade.

Enjolras had the door of the kitchen, which, it will be remembered, served as an ambulance, nailed up.

"No spattering of the wounded," he said.

He gave his final instructions in the ground-floor room in a curt, but wonderfully calm voice. Feuilly listened and answered in the name of all.

"Have axes ready on the first-floor to cut away the stairs. Have you them?"

"Yes," answered Feuilly.

"How many?"

"Two axes and a cleaver."

"Very good. Twenty-six fighting-men are left. How many guns are there?"

"Thirty-four."

"Eight too many. Keep those eight guns loaded like the others, and within reach. Place your sabres and pistols in your belts. Twenty men to the barricade. Six will lie in ambush in the garret and at the first-floor window, to fire on the assailants through the loop-holes in the paving-stones. Let not a single workman stand idle. Presently, when the drummer sounds the charge, let the twenty men below rush to the barricade. The first to arrive will be the best placed."

These arrangements made, he turned to Javert, and said:—

"I have not forgotten you."

And, laying a pistol on the table, he added:—

"The last man to leave this room will blow out that spy's brains."

"Here?" asked a voice.

"No, let us not mix his corpse with ours. It is easy to stride over the small barricade in Mondétour Lane. It is only four feet high. The man is securely bound. Lead him there and execute him."

Some one was at this moment even more unmoved than Enjolras; it was Javert.

Here Jean Valjean appeared. He had mingled with

the group of insurgents. He stepped forward and said to Enjolras:—

"Are you the commandant?"

"Yes."

"You thanked me just now."

"In the name of the republic. The barricade has two saviours,— Marius Pontmercy and yourself."

"Do you think that I deserve a reward?"

"Certainly."

"Well, then, I ask one."

"What is it?"

"To blow out that man's brains myself."

Javert raised his head, saw Jean Valjean, gave a scarcely perceptible start, and said: "That is fair."

As for Enjolras, he was reloading his gun. He looked around him.

"Any objections?"

And he turned to Jean Valjean: "Take the spy."

Jean Valjean took possession of Javert by seating himself on the end of the table. He seized the pistol, and a faint click showed that he had cocked it.

Almost at the same moment the bugle-call was heard.

"Mind yourselves!" shouted Marius from the top of the barricade.

Javert began to laugh that noiseless laugh peculiar to him, and looking intently at the insurgents, he said:

"You are no better off than I am."

"All out!" cried Enjolras.

The insurgents rushed tumultuously forth; and as they passed, Javert smote them on the back, so to speak, with the expression: "We shall meet again soon."

CHAPTER XIX

THE VENGEANCE OF JEAN VALJEAN

WHEN Jean Valjean was alone with Javert, he undid the rope which fastened the prisoner round the waist, the knot of which was under the table. After this he made him a sign to rise.

Javert obeyed with that indefinable smile, in which the supremacy of enchained authority is condensed.

Jean Valjean seized Javert by the martingale, as he might have taken a beast of burden by its halter, and dragging him after him, quitted the wine-shop slowly; for Javert, having his feet hobbled, could take only very short steps.

Jean Valjean held the pistol in his hand.

Thus they crossed the inner square of the barricade. The insurgents, intent on the immediate attack, turned their backs.

Marius alone, placed on one side, at the extreme left of the barricade, saw them pass. This group of the victim and his executioner was illumined by the sepulchral light which filled his own soul.

Jean Valjean, with some difficulty, forced Javert to climb over the barricade, but did not relax his hold. When they had crossed the barrier, they found themselves alone in Mondétour Lane. No one could now see them. The jog formed by the houses hid them from the insurgents. The corpses removed from the barricade, formed a horrible pile a few paces from them. Among the dead they distinguished a livid face, dishevelled hair, a pierced hand, and the half-naked bosom of a woman. It was Eponine.

Javert looked askance at this dead girl, and said with profound calmness:—

"I fancy I know that girl."

Then he turned to Jean Valjean, who put the pistol under

his arm and fixed on Javert a glance which needed no words to say, "Javert, it is I."

Javert answered: "Take your revenge."

Jean Valjean took a knife from his pocket and opened it.

"A clasp-knife!" exclaimed Javert. "You are right. That suits you better."

Jean Valjean cut the martingale which Javert had around his neck, then he cut the ropes on his wrists, and then, stooping down, those on his feet; then rising again, he said: "You are free!"

It was not easy to astonish Javert. Still, master of himself though he was, he could not suppress his emotion. He stood gaping and motionless.

Jean Valjean continued:—

"I do not believe that I shall leave this place alive. Still, if by accident I do, I live under the name of Fauchelevent, at No. 7, Rue de l'Homme Armé."

Javert gave a tigerish snarl, which opened one corner of his mouth, and muttered between his teeth:—

"Take care!"

"Go!" said Jean Valjean.

Javert added:—

"You said Fauchelevent, Rue de l'Homme Armé?"

"No. 7."

Javert repeated in a low voice: "No. 7."

He rebuttoned his frock-coat, resumed the military stiffness between his shoulders, made a half turn, crossed his arms, rested his chin on one hand, and walked off in the direction of the Markets. Jean Valjean looked after him. After going a few yards, Javert turned and shouted:—

"You annoy me. I would sooner you killed me."

"Begone!" said Valjean.

Javert withdrew slowly. A moment after, he turned the corner of the Rue des Prêcheurs.

When Javert had disappeared, Jean Valjean discharged the pistol in the air.

Then he returned to the barricade, saying:—

"It is done."

This is what had taken place meantime. Marius, more occupied with the outside than the inside, had not hitherto attentively regarded the spy bound in the dark background of the ground-floor room.

When he saw him in open daylight, bestriding the barricade, on his way to death, he recognized him, and a sudden memory entered his mind. He remembered the inspector of the Rue Pontoise, and the two pistols he had given him, which he, Marius, had employed at this very barricade; and he not only remembered his face, but his name.

This recollection, however, was foggy and disturbed, like all his ideas.

It was not an affirmation that he made, so much as a question which he asked himself: "Is not that the police inspector who told me that his name was Javert?" Perhaps there was still time to interfere in that man's behalf. But first he must know whether it really was that same Javert.

Marius shouted to Enjolras, who had just stationed himself at the other end of the barricade:—

"Enjolras!"

"Well?"

"What is that man's name?"

"Which man?"

"The police agent. Do you know his name?"

"Of course I do. He told us."

"What is it?"

"Javert."

Marius started, but at that moment the pistol-shot was heard. Jean Valjean re-appeared, saying, "It is done." A dark chill ran through Marius's heart.

CHAPTER XX

THE DEAD ARE RIGHT AND THE LIVING ARE NOT WRONG

THE death-agony of the barricade was about to begin.

Everything added to the tragical majesty of this supreme moment,— a thousand mysterious sounds in the air; the breathing of armed masses set in motion in streets which could not be seen; the intermittent gallop of cavalry; the heavy rumble of artillery on the march; the platoon firing and the cannonading crossing each other in the labyrinth of Paris; the smoke of battle rising golden above the roofs; distant and vaguely terrible cries; flashes of menace everywhere; the tocsin of St. Merry, which now had the sound of a sob; the mildness of the season; the splendour of the sky full of sunshine and clouds; the beauty of the day; and the fearful silence of the houses. For, since the previous evening the two rows of houses in the Rue de la Chanvrerie had become two walls,— ferocious walls, with closed doors, closed windows, and closed shutters.

At that day, so different from the present time, when the hour came when the people wished to put an end to a situation which had lasted too long, to a charter granted or a country defined by law, not by nature, when universal wrath filled all the air, when the city consented to an upheaving of paving-stones, when insurrection made the middle classes smile by whispering its watchword in their ear, then the inhabitant, impregnated with riot, so to speak, was the auxiliary of the combatant, and the house fraternized with the improvised fortress which it supported. When the situation was not ripe, when the insurrection was not decidedly accepted, when the masses disowned the movement, it was all over with the combatants; the town was changed into a desert round the revolt, spirits grew cold, refuges

were walled up, and the street was turned into a defile to help the army to take the barricade.

A people cannot be compelled through surprise to move faster than it wishes. Woe to the man who tries to force its hand! A people will not put up with it. It then abandons the insurrection to itself. The insurgents become lepers. A house is a precipice, a door is a refusal, and a façade is a wall. This wall sees, hears, and will not. It might open and save you, but no; that wall is a judge. It looks at you and condemns you. What gloomy things are these closed houses! They seem dead though they are alive. Life, which is, as it were, suspended, clings to them. No one has come out for the last four-and-twenty hours, but no one is absent. In the interior of that rock, people come and go, retire to bed and rise again. They are in the bosom of their family; they eat and drink; they are afraid,—a terrible thing! Fear excuses this dreadful lack of hospitality; alarm offers extenuating circumstances. Sometimes even, and this has actually been seen, fear turns to passion, fright may be changed into fury, as prudence into rage; hence the profound remark: "None so mad as the moderate." There are flashes of supreme terror, from which passion issues like mournful smoke. "What do these people want? They are never satisfied. They compromise peaceable men. As if we had not had enough revolutions of this sort! What are they here for? Let them get out of it as they can. So much the worse for them. It is their fault. They have only got what they deserve. It does not concern us. Look at our poor street torn to pieces by cannon. They are a pack of scamps. Above all things, don't open the door." And the house assumes the aspect of a tomb. The insurgent dies a lingering death before that door. He sees the grape-shot and naked swords draw near. If he cries out, he knows there are those who hear him, but will not help him; there are walls which might protect him, and men who might save him; and those walls have ears of flesh, and those men have bowels of stone.

Whom shall we accuse?

Nobody and everybody.

The imperfect times in which we live.

It is always at its own risk and peril that Utopia is converted into insurrection, and becomes an armed protest instead of a philosophic protest,— a Pallas and no longer a Minerva.

The Utopia which grows impatient and becomes riot knows what awaits it; it almost always comes too soon. Then it resigns itself, and stoically accepts catastrophe in lieu of triumph. It serves, without complaining, even excusing them, those who deny it; and its magnanimity is to consent to abandonment. It is indomitable in the face of obstacles, and gentle in the face of ingratitude.

Is it ingratitude, after all?

Yes, from the universal point of view.

No, from the individual point of view.

Progress is the fashion of man. The general life of the human race is called Progress; and the collective pace of the human race is also called Progress. Progress moves onward. It makes the great terrestrial and human journey toward the celestial and divine. It has its halting places where it rallies the straying flock; it has its stations where it meditates, in the presence of some splendid Canaan suddenly unveiling its horizon; it has its nights when it sleeps; and it is one of the poignant anxieties of the thinker that he sees the shadow resting on the human soul, and gropes in darkness for that slumbering Progress, without being able to awaken it.

"Perhaps God is dead," said Gerard de Nerval one day to the writer of these lines, confounding progress with God, and taking the interruption of movement for the death of Being.

The man who despairs is wrong. Progress infallibly reawakens, and we might say that it moves, even when asleep, for it has grown. When we see it upright once more, we find that it is taller. To be always at rest depends no more on progress than on the river. Raise no barriers, throw in

no rocks; obstacles make water bubble and humanity boil. Hence come troubles; but after these troubles are past, we see that way has been made. Until order, which is nought else than universal peace, is established, until harmony and unity reign, progress will have revolutions for its halting-places.

What, then, is progress? We have just declared it,—the permanent life of the masses.

Now, it sometimes happens that the momentary life of individuals offers resistance to the eternal life of the human race.

Let us admit, without bitterness, that the individual has his distinct interests, and can, without felony, stipulate for those interests and defend them. The present has its pardonable amount of egotism; momentary life has its claims, and cannot be expected to sacrifice itself incessantly to the future. The generation which is in its turn passing over the earth is not forced to abridge its life for the sake of the generations, its equals after all, whose turn will come later on. "I exist," murmurs that some one, whose name is All. "I am young and in love, I am old and wish to rest, I am the father of a family, I work, I prosper, I do a good business, I have houses to let, I have money in government bonds, I am happy, I have wife and children, I like all this, I wish to live; leave me in peace." Hence, at certain hours, a profound chill falls upon the magnanimous vanguard of the human race.

Utopia, moreover, we confess, deserts its radiant sphere when it wages war. It, the truth of to-morrow, borrows its process, battle, from the falsehood of yesterday. It, the future, acts like the past. It, the pure idea, becomes an assault. It complicates its heroism with a violence for which it is but fair that it should answer,— a violence of opportunity and expediency, contrary to principles, and for which it is fatally punished. Utopia, when in a state of insurrection, fights with the old military code in its fist. It shoots spies, executes traitors, suppresses living beings, and hurls

them into unknown darkness. It makes use of death,— a serious thing. It seems as if Utopia no longer put faith in radiance,— its irresistible and incorruptible strength. It strikes with the sword. Now, no sword is simple. Every sword has two edges; the man who wounds with the one is himself wounded with the other.

This reservation made, and made with all severity, it is impossible for us not to admire, whether they succeed or no, the glorious combatants of the future,— the confessors of Utopia. Even when they fail, they are venerable; and it is perhaps in failure that they possess most majesty. Victory, when in accordance with progress, deserves the applause of the people; but heroic defeat merits their tenderness. The one is magnificent, the other sublime. To us, who prefer martyrdom to success, John Brown is greater than Washington, and Pisacane greater than Garibaldi.

Some one must take part with the conquered.

We are unjust to these great essayers of the future when they fail.

Revolutionists are accused of sowing terror. Every barricade seems an outrage. Their theories are incriminated, their object is suspected, their afterthought is apprehended, and their conscience is denounced. They are reproached with raising, erecting, and heaping up against the reigning social fact, a pile of miseries, griefs, iniquities, wrongs, and despair, and with tearing from the lowest depths masses of dark shadows to barricade themselves and combat therein. People shout to them: "You are unpaving hell!" They might answer: "That is why our barricade is made of good intentions."

The best thing, certainly, is the pacific solution. In short, let us agree, when we see the pavement, we think of the bear; and it is a good-will which alarms society. But it depends on society to save itself. It is to its own good-will that we appeal. No violent remedy is necessary. Study the evil amicably, prove its existence, then cure it; that is all we desire.

However this may be, those men, even when fallen, and especially then, are august, who at all points of the universe, with their eyes fixed on France, are struggling for the great work with the inflexible logic of the ideal. They give their life a free offering to progress; they accomplish the will of Providence; they perform a religious act. At the appointed hour, with as much disinterestedness as an actor who takes up his cue, they enter the tomb in obedience to the divine stage manager. They accept this hopeless combat and this stoical disappearance in order to bring about the splendid and supreme universal consequences of the magnificent human movement irresistibly begun on July 14. These soldiers are priests; the French Revolution is a deed of God.

Moreover, there are,— and it is proper to add this distinction to the distinctions already indicated in another chapter,— there are accepted insurrections which are called revolutions; and there are rejected revolutions which are called riots.

An insurrection which breaks out is an idea passing its examination in the presence of the people. If the people drop a black-ball, the idea is dry fruit. The insurrection is a mere skirmish.

To wage war at every appeal, and every time that Utopia desires it, is not the thing for the people. Nations have not always, and at all hours, the temperament of heroes and martyrs.

They are positive. *A priori*, insurrection is repugnant to them, in the first place, because it frequently results in catastrophe, and in the second place, because it always starts from an abstraction.

For, and this is fine, those who sacrifice themselves, do so for the ideal, and the ideal alone. An insurrection is an enthusiasm. Enthusiasm may become fury; hence the appeal to arms. But every insurrection which aims at a government or an administration aims higher. Thus, for instance, let us lay stress on the fact, what the chiefs of the insurrection of 1832, and especially the young enthusiasts of

the Rue de la Chanvrerie combated was not precisely Louis Philippe. The majority, when speaking openly, did justice to the qualities of this king who stood between monarchy and revolution; not one of them hated him. But they attacked the younger branch of the right divine in Louis Philippe, as they had attacked the elder branch in Charles X.; and what they wished to overthrow in overthrowing royalty in France, was, as we have explained, the usurpation of man over man, and of privilege over right throughout the universe. Paris without a king has as its consequence the world without despots. They reasoned in this way. Their object was doubtless remote, vague perhaps, and it shrank before the effect; but it was grand.

So it is. And men sacrifice themselves for these visions, which are almost always illusions for the sacrificed; but illusions with which, after all, the whole of human certainty is mingled.

The insurgent poeticizes and gilds insurrection. Men hurl themselves into these tragic affairs, intoxicating themselves with what they are about to do. Who knows? Perhaps they will succeed. They are the minority. They have an entire army against them; but they are defending the right, natural law, the sovereignty of each over himself, which allows of no abdication, justice, and truth, and, if necessary, they die like the three hundred Spartans. They do not think of Don Quixote, but of Leonidas. And they go straight onward; and, once the battle has begun, they do not shrink, but dash forward, head foremost, hoping for unprecedented victory, revolution completed, progress set free again, the aggrandizement of the human race, universal deliverance,—at the worst, a Thermopylæ.

These passages of arms for progress frequently suffer shipwreck, and we have explained the cause. The mob is restive against the impulse of paladins. The heavy masses, the multitudes, fragile because of their very weight, fear adventures; and there is a touch of adventure in the ideal.

Moreover, we must not forget that there are interests in the

way which are no great friends of the ideal and the sentimental. Sometimes the stomach paralyzes the heart.

The greatness and beauty of France are due to the fact that she does not put on flesh so fast as other nations. She knots the rope round her loins with greater facility. She is the first to wake and the last to fall asleep. She goes forward. She seeks. This is because she is an artist.

The ideal is nought else than the culminating point of logic, just as the beautiful is only the summit of the true. Artistic people are also consistent people. To love beauty is to see light. This is why the torch of Europe — that is to say, of civilization — was first borne by Greece, who passed it on to Italy, who passed it on to France. Divine, illuminating nations! *Vitæ lampada tradunt.*

It is an admirable thing that the poesy of a people is the element of its progress. The amount of civilization is measured by the amount of imagination. Still, a civilizing people should remain a manly people. Corinth, yes; but Sybaris, no. The man who grows effeminate becomes a bastard. A man must be neither a dilettante nor a virtuoso; but he should be artistic. In the matter of civilization, he must not refine but sublime. On that condition, the pattern of the ideal is given to the human race.

The modern ideal has its type in art and its means in science. It is by science that the august vision of the poet — social beauty — will be realized. Eden will be restored by A + B. At the point which civilization has now reached, the exact is a necessary element of the splendid. An artistic feeling is not only served but completed by the scientific organ; the dream must calculate. Art, which is the conqueror, should have science, which is the motor, as its base. The strength of the steed is an important factor. The modern mind is the genius of Greece, with the genius of India as its vehicle,— Alexander mounted on the elephant.

Races petrified in dogma, or demoralized by lucre, are unfit to guide civilization. Genuflection before the idol or the dollar destroys the muscles which walk and the will that moves.

Hieratic or mercantile absorption reduces the radiation of a people, lowers its horizon by lowering its level, and deprives it of that appreciation, at once human and divine, of the universal goal which renders nations missionaries. Babylon has no ideal; Carthage has no ideal. Athens and Rome have, and retain, even through all the nocturnal destiny of ages, a halo of civilization.

France is of the same quality, as a people, as Greece and Italy. She is Athenian in her love of beauty, and Roman in her love of grandeur. Besides, she is good. She is more often than other nations in the humour for devotion and sacrifice,— only, this humour takes her and leaves her. This is the great danger for those who run when she wishes merely to walk, or who walk when she wishes to halt. France has her relapses into materialism; and at certain seasons the ideas which obstruct that sublime brain have nothing that recalls French grandeur, and are of the dimensions of a Missouri or a South Carolina. What is to be done? The giantess plays the dwarf; immense France takes a notion to pettiness. That is all.

To this, there is nothing to be said. People, like planets, have the right to be eclipsed. And all is well, provided that light return, and the eclipse does not degenerate into night. Dawn and resurrection are synonymous. The reappearance of light is identical with the persistence of the Ego.

Let us state these facts calmly. Death on a barricade, or a tomb in exile, is an acceptable occasion for devotion. The true name of devotion is disinterestedness. Let the abandoned submit to abandonment, let the exiled submit to exile, and let us confine ourselves to imploring great nations not to retreat too far when they do retreat. Under the pretext of a return to reason, we must not go too far down the incline. Matter exists, the moment exists, interests exist, the stomach exists; but the stomach must not be the sole wisdom. Momentary life has its rights, we admit, but so has permanent life. Alas! the fact that we are mounted does not prevent a fall. We see this in history more frequently than

we could wish. A nation is illustrious; it tastes the ideal, then it bites the mud and finds it good; and if we ask it why it abandons Socrates for Falstaff, it replies: "Because I love statesmen."

One word before returning to the barricade.

A battle like that which we are now describing is only a convulsive effort toward the ideal. Impeded progress is sickly; it has these tragic attacks of epilepsy. This malady of progress — civil war — we have met as we passed along. It is one of the fatal phases, at once an act and an interlude, in that drama whose pivot is a social condemnation, and whose true title is *Progress.*

Progress!

This cry, which we raise so frequently, is our entire thought; and at the point in our drama which we have now reached, the idea which it contains having more than one trial yet to undergo, we may, perhaps, be permitted, even if we do not raise the veil, at least to let its light shine through clearly.

The book which the reader has before him at this moment is, from one end to the other, as a whole and in its details, whatever its intermissions, exceptions, and shortcomings may be, a progress from evil to good, from injustice to justice, from falsehood to truth, from night to day, from appetite to conscience, from corruption to life, from bestiality to duty, from hell to heaven, and from nothingness to God. The starting-point is matter; the terminus, the soul. The hydra at the beginning, the angel at the end.

CHAPTER XXI

THE HEROES

SUDDENLY the drum beat the charge.

The attack was a hurricane. On the previous evening the barricade had been approached silently, in the darkness, as by a boa. Now, in broad daylight, within this broad street, surprise was clearly impossible; besides, the armed force was unmasked, the cannon had begun to roar, and the troops rushed upon the barricade. Fury was now skill. A powerful column of line infantry, intersected at regular intervals by National Guards and dismounted Municipal Guards, and supported by serried masses, which were heard but not seen, filed into the street in double quick time, with drums beating, bugles braying, bayonets levelled, the sappers in front, and, imperturbable under the shower of projectiles, dashed straight at the barricade with all the weight of a bronze battering-ram. The wall held firm.

The insurgents fired impetuously. The barricade once scaled, displayed a flashing mane. The attack was so violent that it was for a moment flooded with assailants: but it shook off the soldiers as the lion does the dogs, and it was only covered with besiegers as the cliff is with foam, to re-appear, a minute later, steep, black, and formidable.

The column, compelled to fall back, remained massed in the street, exposed but terrible, and answered the redoubt by a tremendous musketry-fire. Any one who has seen fireworks will remember the piece composed of a cross-fire of lightnings, which is called a bouquet. Imagine this bouquet, no longer vertical but horizontal, bearing at the end of each jet of flame, a bullet, a slug, or an iron shell, and scattering death from its clusters of lightning. The barricade was beneath it.

On either side, was equal resolution. The bravery shown there was almost barbarous, and was complicated by a sort of

heroic ferocity which began with self-sacrifice. It was the epoch when a National Guard fought like a Zouave. The troops desired to make an end of it; insurrection wished to prolong the struggle. The acceptance of death in the height of youth and health converts intrepidity into frenzy. Every man in this action felt the aggrandizement of the final hour. The street was strewed with corpses.

The barricade had Marius at one of its ends and Enjolras at the other. Enjolras, who carried the whole barricade in his head, reserved and sheltered himself; three soldiers fell one after the other, under his loop-hole, without even seeing him. Marius fought unprotected. He made himself a mark. More than half his body rose above the top of the redoubt. There is no greater spendthrift than a miser who takes the bit between his teeth; no man is more terrible in action than a dreamer. Marius was formidable and pensive. He moved through battle as through a dream. He seemed like a ghost handling a musket.

The cartridges of the besieged were exhausted; not so their sarcasms. In this tornado of the tomb in which they stood, they laughed.

Courfeyrac was bareheaded.

"What have you done with your hat?" asked Bossuet.

Courfeyrac answered: "They have carried it away at last with cannon-balls."

Or they made haughty comments.

"Can you understand," bitterly exclaimed Feuilly, "those men" (and he mentioned names, well-known and even celebrated names, some belonging to the old army) "who promised to join us and swore to aid us, and who pledged their honour, and who are our generals, and who abandon us?"

Combeferre contented himself with replying with a grave smile: —

"There are people who observe the rules of honour as men observe the stars,— from a great distance."

The interior of the barricade was so sown with torn cartridges that it seemed as if there had been a snowstorm.

The assailants had the advantage of numbers; the insurgents, of position. They were at the top of a wall, and overwhelmed at point-blank range the soldiers stumbling over the dead and wounded, and embarrassed by the steep ascent. This barricade, built as it was, and admirably buttressed, was really one of those situations where a handful of men may hold a legion in check. Still, the attacking column, constantly recruited and increasing beneath the shower of bullets, inexorably approached, and now, gradually, step by step, little by little, but surely, the army closed in upon the barricade as the screw does on the wine-press.

One assault followed another. The horror became constantly greater.

Then there broke out on that pile of paving-stones, in the Rue de la Chanvrerie, a struggle worthy of a wall of Troy. Those haggard, ragged, and exhausted men, who had not eaten for four-and-twenty hours, who had not slept, who had but a few more rounds to fire, who fumbled in their empty pockets for cartridges,— these men, nearly all wounded, with head or arm bound round with black blood-stained rags, with holes in their coats from which the blood flowed, scantily armed with wretched guns and old notched sabres, became Titans. The barricade was ten times approached, assaulted, scaled, and never captured. To form any idea of that contest, it would be necessary to imagine a heap of terrible courages set on fire, and then to watch the conflagration. It was not a combat; it was the interior of a furnace. Mouths breathed forth flames; faces were extraordinary. The human form seemed impossible there; the combatants flashed and flamed; and it was a fearful sight to see those salamanders of the fray flit to and fro in that red smoke.

The successive and simultaneous scenes of that tremendous butchery are beyond our power to depict. Epic poetry alone has the right to fill twelve thousand verses with a battle.

It seemed that inferno of Brahminism, the most terrible of the seventeen abysses, which the Veda calls the Forest of Swords.

They fought foot to foot, body to body; with pistol-shots, sabre-cuts, and fists; close by, at a distance, above, below, on all sides; from the roofs of the houses, from the windows of the wine-shop, and even from the trap-doors of the cellars into which some had slipped. The odds were sixty to one.

The front of Corinth, half demolished, was hideous. The window, tattooed with grape-shot, had lost glass and frame, and was only a shapeless hole, tumultuously stopped up with paving-stones. Bossuet was killed; Feuilly was killed; Courfeyrac was killed; Joly was killed; Combeferre, transfixed by three bayonet-stabs in the breast at the moment when he was raising a wounded soldier, had only time to look up to heaven, and expired.

Marius, still fighting, was so riddled with wounds, especially in the head, that his face was lost in blood, and looked as if it were covered by a red handkerchief.

Enjolras alone was not wounded. When he had no weapon, he held out his hand to the right or left, and an insurgent placed some weapon or other in his fist. He had only the fragments of four sword-blades left; one more than Francis I. had at Marignano.

Homer says: "Diomedes slays Axylus, son of Teuthras who dwelt in happy Arisba; Euryalus, son of Mecistaeus, kills Dresos and Opheltes, Æsepus, and that Pedasus whom the naïad Abarbarea bore to the blameless Bucolion; Ulysses overthrows Pidytes of Percosia; Antilochus, Ablerus; Polypaetes, Astyalus; Polydamas, Otus of Cyllene; and Teucer, Aretaon. Meganthius dies from the blows of the spear of Euripylus. Agamemnon, king of heroes, lays low Elatos, born in the rocky town which is laved by the sounding river Satniois." In our old poems of exploits, Esplandian attacks with a flaming twi-bill the giant Marquis Swantibore, who defends himself by stoning the knight with towers which he uproots. Our ancient mural frescoes show us the two Dukes of Brittany and Bourbon, armed, emblazoned and arrayed for war, on horseback, and approaching each other, battle-axe in hand, masked with steel, shod with steel, gloved with steel, one

caparisoned with ermine and the other draped in azure; Brittany with his lion between the two horns of his crown, Bourbon with an enormous *fleur-de-lis* at his visor. But, in order to be superb, it is not necessary to wear, like Yvon, the ducal morion; to have in one hand like Esplandian a living flame; or like Phylas, the father of Polydamas, to bring back from Ephyra a good suit of armour, a present from the king of men, Euphetes. It is sufficient to lay down one's life for a conviction or from loyalty. That simple little soldier, yesterday a peasant of Beauce or Limousin, who prowls about, clasp-knife by his side, round the nurse-maids in the Luxembourg garden, that pale young student bending over an anatomical study or a book, a fair-haired boy who shaves himself with a pair of scissors,— take them both, breathe duty into them, put them face to face in the Carrefour Boucherat or the Planche-Mibray blind alley, and let one fight for his flag and the other for his ideal, and let both imagine that they are fighting for their country. The struggle will be colossal; and the shadow cast by the raw recruit and the sawbones in conflict, on the great epic field where humanity is struggling, will be equal to that thrown by Megarion, King of Lycia, the land abounding in tigers, as he wrestles with the immense Ajax, the equal of the gods.

CHAPTER XXII

STEP BY STEP

WHEN there were no longer any leaders left alive save Enjolras and Marius at the two ends of the barricade, the centre, which had so long been supported by Courfeyrac, Bossuet, Joly, Feuilly, and Combeferre, yielded. The cannon, without making a practical breach, had severely injured the centre of the redoubt. There, the crest of the wall had

disappeared under the balls, and had crumbled away; and the fragments which had fallen, both inside and outside, had, as they accumulated, formed two slopes on the two sides of the barrier,— one on the outside and one on the inside. The outer one presented an inclined plane to the attack.

A final assault was attempted there; and this assault was successful. The mass bristling with bayonets and hurled forward at a run, came up irresistibly; and the dense battlement of the attacking column appeared in the smoke on the top of the scarp. This time, all was over. The band of insurgents defending the centre retreated pell-mell.

Then the gloomy love of life was rekindled in some. Covered by that forest of muskets, some did not wish to die. It is at such moments that the instinct of self-preservation utters yells, and the beast reappears in man. They were drawn up against the tall six-storied house which formed the back of the redoubt. This house might prove their salvation. This house was barricaded, and, as it were, walled up from top to bottom. Before the troops reached the interior of the redoubt there was time for a door to open and shut. The space of a lightning flash would suffice for that. And the door of that house suddenly thrown ajar and instantly closed again, meant life for those desperate men. At the back of the house there were streets, possible flight and space. They began to kick and knock at the door with the butts of their guns and their feet, calling, crying, imploring, and wringing their hands. No one opened. The head of the dead man looked down on them from the third-floor window.

But Marius, Enjolras, and seven or eight men who rallied round them, rushed forward, and protected them. Enjolras shouted to the soldiers: "Do not advance!" and as an officer declined to obey, he killed the officer. He was now in the little inner court of the redoubt, with his back to Corinth, his sword in one hand, a carbine in the other, holding open the door of the wine-shop, which he barred against the assailants. He shouted to the desperate men: "There is but one open door; this one." And covering them with his body,

and facing a battalion alone, he allowed them to pass in behind him. All rushed thither. Enjolras, whirling his musket about his head like a club, beat back the bayonets around and before him, and was the last to enter; and there was a frightful movement,— the troops trying to enter, the insurgents striving to bar them out. The door was closed with such violence that the five fingers of a soldier who had caught hold of the door-post were cut clean off, and remained glued to the frame.

Marius was left outside. A bullet had broken his collar-bone; he felt himself fainting and falling. At this moment, when his eyes were already closed, he was conscious of a powerful hand seizing him; and the swoon into which he sank scarcely left him time for this thought, mingled with a last memory of Cosette:

"I am made prisoner, I shall be shot."

Enjolras, not seeing Marius among those who had sought shelter in the house, had the same idea. But they had reached that moment when each could think only of his own death. Enjolras put the bar across the door, bolted and double-locked it, while the soldiers beat it furiously with musket-butts and the sappers attacked it with their axes outside. The assailants were grouped round that door. The siege of the wine-shop now began.

The soldiers, let us add, were full of fury.

The death of the sergeant of artillery had enraged them; and then, more mournful still, during the few hours that preceded the attack, a whisper ran along the ranks that the insurgents were mutilating their prisoners, and that there was a headless body of a soldier in the tavern. This sort of fatal rumour is the usual accompaniment of civil war; and it was a false report of the same nature which, later on, produced the catastrophe of the Rue Transnonain.

When the door was secured, Enjolras said to the others: "Let us sell our lives dearly."

Then he went up to the table on which Mabœuf and Gavroche were stretched. Under the black cloth two forms could

be seen, straight and rigid, one tall, the other short; and the two faces were vaguely outlined beneath the cold folds of the winding-sheet. From under the shroud, a hand hung toward the ground. It was that of the old man.

Enjolras bent and kissed that venerable hand, as he had kissed the forehead on the previous evening.

These were the only two kisses which he had ever given in his life.

Let us be brief. The barricade had resisted like a gate of Thebes; the wine-shop resisted like a house of Saragossa. Such resistances are dogged. There is no quarter. No flag of truce is possible. Men are willing to die, provided that they can kill. When Suchet says: "Capitulate!" Palafox answers: "After the war with cannon, the war with the knife." Nothing was wanting in the attack on the Hucheloup wine-shop,— neither paving-stones raining from the windows and roof on the besiegers, and exasperating the troops by the frightful havoc that they committed, nor shots from the attics and cellar, nor the fury of attack, nor the rage of defence, nor, finally, when the door gave way, the frenzied madness of extermination. The assailants, rushing into the wine-shop, their feet entangled in the panels of the broken door which lay on the ground, found not a single combatant. The winding staircase, cut away with axes, lay in the middle of the room, a few wounded men were just expiring; all who were not killed were on the next floor, and a terrific fire was discharged thence through the hole in the ceiling which had formed the entrance to the staircase. These were their last cartridges. When they were expended, when those terrible men, at the point of death, had no powder or balls left, each seized a couple of the bottles reserved by Enjolras, as we have mentioned, and defended the stairs with those frightfully fragile weapons. They were bottles of aqua fortis.

We describe these gloomy details of carnage exactly as they are. The besieged, alas! make weapons of everything. Greek fire did not dishonour Archimedes; boiling pitch did

not dishonour Bayard. All war is a horror, and there is nothing to choose. The musketry-fire of the assailants, though impeded and discharged from below upward, was murderous. The brink of the hole in the ceiling was soon lined with heads of the dead, whence dripped long, red, steaming jets. The noise was indescribable: a close and burning smoke almost threw night over the combat. Words fail to describe horror when it has reached this stage. There were no longer men in this now infernal struggle. They were no longer giants contending against Titans. It resembled Milton and Dante rather than Homer. Demons attacked, spectres resisted.

It was a monstrous heroism.

CHAPTER XXIII

ORESTES FASTING AND PYLADES DRUNK

AT length, by climbing on one another's shoulders, using the skeleton of the staircase, climbing up the walls, clinging to the ceiling, and killing at the very edge of the trap-door the last who resisted, some twenty assailants, soldiers, National and Municipal Guards, pell-mell, most of them disfigured by wounds in the face during that dreadful ascent, blinded by blood, furious and savage, burst into the first-floor room. There was but one man left on his feet,— Enjolras. Without cartridges, without sword, he had nothing now in his hand but the barrel of his carbine, whose butt he had broken over the heads of those who entered. He had placed the billiard-table between himself and his assailants; he had retreated to the corner of the room, and there, with flashing eyes and head erect, that fragment of a weapon in his hand, he was still sufficiently alarming to create an empty space around him. A cry was raised: —

"It is the chief! It was he who killed the artilleryman. As he has placed himself there, it is well. Let him remain there. Shoot him on the spot."

"Shoot me," said Enjolras.

And throwing away the stump of his gun, and folding his arms, he offered his breast.

Courage to die bravely always moves men. So soon as Enjolras folded his arms, accepting the end, the din of strife ceased in the room, and that chaos was suddenly hushed into a sort of sepulchral solemnity. It seemed as if the menacing majesty of Enjolras, disarmed and motionless, produced an effect on the tumult, and as if by the mere authority of his tranquil glance, that young man, who alone was unwounded, superb, blood-stained, charming, and indifferent, like one invulnerable, constrained the sinister mob to kill him respectfully.

His beauty, heightened at this moment by his haughtiness, was dazzling; and, as if he could no more be fatigued than wounded, after the frightful four-and-twenty hours which had just elapsed, he was fresh and rosy. It was to him, possibly, that a witness referred when he said later, before the court-martial; "There was one insurgent whom I heard called Apollo." A National Guard who took aim at Enjolras, lowered his musket, saying: "I feel as if I were going to shoot a flower."

Twelve men formed into a platoon in the corner opposite Enjolras, and got their muskets ready in silence. Then a sergeant shouted: "Take aim!"

An officer interposed.

"Wait!"

And addressing Enjolras:—

"Do you wish to have your eyes bandaged?"

"No."

"Was it really you who killed the sergeant of artillery?"

"Yes."

Grantaire had waked some minutes before.

Grantaire, it will be remembered, had been sleeping since

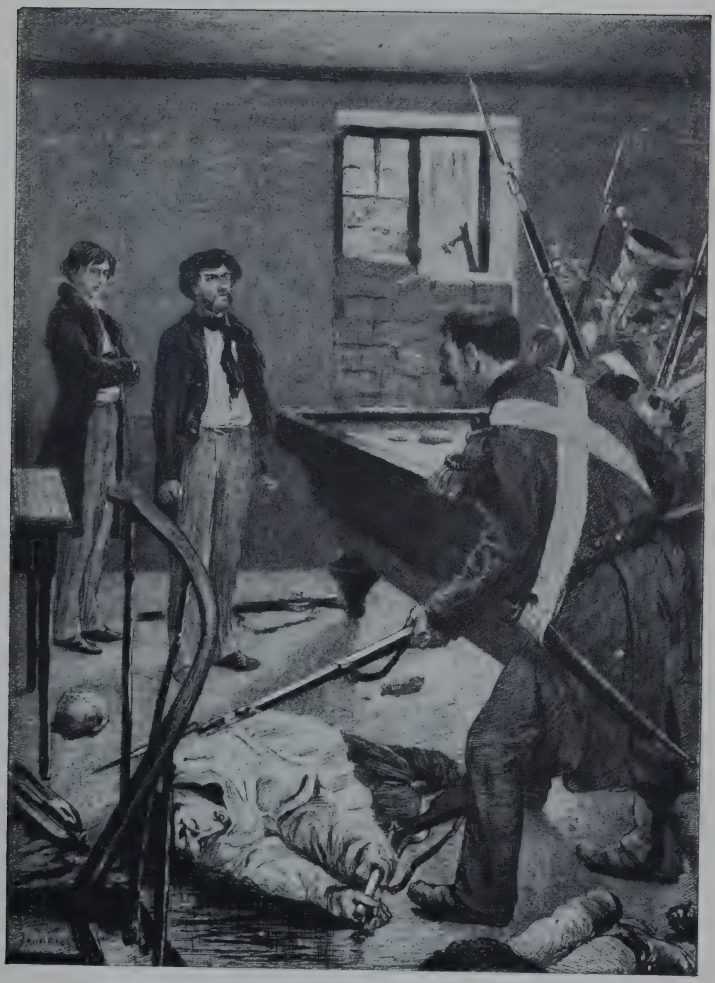
the previous evening in the upper room, sitting in a chair, with his head lying on a table.

He realized in its full force the old metaphor, "dead drunk." The hideous potion of absinthe, stout, and alcohol had thrown him into a lethargic state. As his table was small, and of no use at the barricade they had left it to him. He was still in the same posture,— his chest bent over the table, his head lying flat on his arms, surrounded by glasses, beer-mugs, and bottles. He was sleeping the heavy sleep of the torpid bear, or the sated leech. Nothing had roused him, — neither the platoon fire, nor the cannon-balls, nor the canister which made its way through the window into the room where he was, nor the prodigious noise of the assault. He merely responded to the cannon by an occasional snore. He seemed to be waiting for a bullet to save him the trouble of waking. Several corpses lay around him; and, at the first glance, there was nothing to distinguish him from those deep sleepers of death.

Noise does not wake a drunken man. Silence arouses him. This peculiarity has been more than once observed. The fall of everything about him increased Grantaire's lethargy; noise lulled him. The sort of halt which the tumult made before Enjolras was a shock to this heavy sleep. It was like the effect of a coach going at full speed, which stops short. The drowsy occupants awake. Grantaire started up, stretched his arms, rubbed his eyes, stared, yawned, and understood.

Intoxication wearing off resembles a curtain that is rent asunder. A man sees, as a whole, and at a single glance, all that was hidden. Everything appears suddenly to the memory; and the drunkard, who knows nothing of what has happened during the last twenty-four hours, has no sooner opened his eyes than he understands it all. His ideas return with abrupt clearness; the obliteration of intoxication, a sort of steam that blinded his brain, is dispersed, and makes way for a distinct and sharply outlined apprehension of reality.

Relegated, as he was, to a corner, and sheltered, so to speak, by the billiard-table, the soldiers, whose eyes were fixed on



"He repeated, 'Long live the republic!' crossed the room with a firm step, and placed himself before the muskets at Enjolras' side."

Les Miserables. Jean Valjean. Page 95.

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Enjolras, had not even seen Grantaire; and the sergeant was preparing to repeat the order, "Take aim!" when all at once a loud voice was heard close beside them: —

"Long live the republic! I belong to it."

Grantaire had risen. The infinite light of all the combat which he had missed, and in which he had had no part, appeared in the flashing glance of the transfigured drunkard.

He repeated, "Long live the republic!" crossed the room with a firm step, and placed himself before the muskets, at Enjolras's side.

"Kill us both at one blow," said he.

And turning gently to Enjolras, he asked: —

"Are you willing?"

Enjolras pressed his hand with a smile.

That smile had not faded when the report rang out.

Enjolras, pierced by eight bullets, remained leaning against the wall, as if nailed to it by the balls. He merely hung his head.

Grantaire fell dead at his feet as if struck by lightning.

A few minutes later, the soldiers dislodged the last insurgents, who had taken refuge at the top of the house. They fired through a partition in the garret. They fought under the very roof. They threw bodies, some of them still alive, out of the windows. Two light-infantry men, who were trying to raise the broken omnibus, were killed by two shots from the attic. A man in a blouse was flung out with a bayonet thrust in his stomach, and lay expiring on the ground. A private and an insurgent slipped together down the sloping tiles of the roof; and, as they would not loose their hold, they fell into the street, clasping each other in a ferocious embrace. There was a similar struggle in the cellar. Shouts, shots, and a fierce trampling; then silence. The barricade was captured.

The soldiers began to search the adjacent houses and to pursue the fugitives.

CHAPTER XXIV

PRISONER!

MARIUS was indeed a prisoner. A prisoner to Jean Valjean.

The hand which had clutched him from behind and whose grasp he felt at the moment when he fell and lost consciousness was Jean Valjean's hand.

Jean Valjean had taken no other part in the struggle than to expose himself in it. Had it not been for him, in that supreme phase of agony, no one would have thought of the wounded. Thanks to him, everywhere present in the carnage like a providence, those who fell were picked up, carried to the ground-floor room, and had their wounds dressed. In the intervals he repaired the barricade. But nothing that could resemble a blow, an attack, or even personal defence, proceeded from his hands. He was silent and succoured. Moreover, he had only a few scratches. The bullets had no billet for him. If suicide formed part of his purpose when he came to this sepulchre, he had not been successful. But we doubt whether he thought of suicide, which is an irreligious act.

Jean Valjean did not seem to see Marius in the thick cloud of combat; but in truth, he did not take his eyes off him. When a bullet laid Marius low, Jean Valjean sprang forward with the agility of a tiger, dashed upon him as on his prey, and carried him off.

The whirlwind of the attack was, at this moment, so violently concentrated on Enjolras and the door of the wine-shop, that no one saw Jean Valjean, supporting the fainting Marius in his arms, cross the unpaved ground of the barricade, and disappear round the corner of Corinth.

Our readers will remember this corner, which formed a sort of cape in the street; it protected a few square feet of ground

from shot and shell, and from all eyes as well. There is thus at times a room which does not burn, in the heart of a conflagration, and in the most raging seas, beyond a promontory, or at the end of a reef, a little quiet nook. It was in this corner of the inner square of the barricade that Eponine drew her last breath.

Here Jean Valjean paused, let Marius slip to the ground, leaned against the wall, and looked around him.

The situation was frightful.

For the moment, for two or three minutes perhaps, this fragment of wall was a shelter; but how could he escape from this massacre? He recalled the agony he had endured in the Rue Polonceau, eight years before, and how he had succeeded in escaping; it was difficult then, but now it was impossible.

He had before him that deaf and implacable house, six-stories high, which seemed to be inhabited only by the dead man leaning out of his window; he had on his right the low barricade which closed the Petite Truanderie. To climb over this obstacle appeared easy, but a line of bayonets rose above the crest of the barrier. The troops of the line were posted beyond the barricade, and were on the watch. It was evident that to cross the barricade was to rush upon the line of the whole platoon, and that any head which ventured to lift itself above the wall of paving-stones, would serve as a mark for sixty muskets. He had on his left the battlefield. Death was behind the corner of the wall.

What was he to do?

A bird alone could have escaped from this place.

And he must decide at once, find an expedient, make up his mind. They were fighting a few paces from him. Fortunately, all were obstinately engaged at a single point,— the wine-shop door; but if it occurred to one soldier, one single soldier, to turn the corner of the house or to attack it on the flank, all was over.

Jean Valjean looked at the house opposite him; he looked at the barricade at his side; then he looked on the ground,

with the violence of the last extremity, desperate, and as if he longed to dig a hole with his eyes.

By dint of looking, something vaguely discernible in such an agony took shape and assumed a form at his feet, as if his eyes had the power to produce the thing demanded. He perceived, a few paces from him, at the foot of the small barricade so pitilessly guarded and watched from without, beneath a pile of paving-stones which partly concealed it, an iron grating, laid flat and flush with the ground. This grating, made of strong cross-bars, was about two feet square. The frame-work of paving-stones which supported it had been torn up, and it was, as it were, set free. Through the bars a glimpse could be caught of a dark opening, something like a chimney-flue or a drain pipe. Jean Valjean darted forward. His old skill at escape rose to his brain like a beam of light. To remove the paving-stones, tear up the grating, take Marius, who was inert as a dead body, on his shoulders, descend with this burden on his loins, helping himself with his elbows and knees, into this sort of well, which was fortunately of no great depth, to let the heavy iron grating over which the loose stones again rolled, fall into place over his head, to set foot on a paved surface, about ten feet below the earth, — all this was executed like something done in delirium, with the strength of a giant and the rapidity of an eagle; it occupied but a few minutes.

Jean Valjean found himself with Marius, who was still unconscious, in a sort of long subterranean corridor.

There, profound peace, absolute silence and night, prevailed.

The impression which he had formerly felt when he fell from the street into the convent, recurred to him. Only, what he now carried was not Cosette; it was Marius.

He could just hear, above his head, like a vague murmur, the fearful uproar of the wine-shop taken by assault.

BOOK II

THE BOWELS OF LEVIATHAN

CHAPTER I

THE EARTH IMPOVERISHED BY THE SEA

PARIS casts twenty-five millions of francs annually into the sea. We assert this without any metaphor. How, and in what way? By day and night.— For what purpose? For no purpose.— With what intention? Without intention.— Why? For no reason.— By means of what organ? Its bowels.— What are its bowels? Its sewers.

Twenty-five million francs are the most moderate of the approximate amounts given by the estimates of modern science.

Science, after groping for a long time, now knows that the most fruitful and effective of fertilizers is human manure. The Chinese, let us say it to our shame, knew this before we did. Not a Chinese peasant — it is Eckeberg who states the fact — goes to the city without bringing back, at either end of his bamboo-pole, a bucketful of what we call filth. Thanks to human manure, the soil in China is still as young as in the days of Abraham. Chinese wheat yields just one-hundred-and-twenty-fold of the sowing. There is no guano comparable in fertility to the detritus of a capital. A large city is the most mighty of dung-makers. Certain success would follow the experiment of employing the town to manure

the plain. If gold be dross, on the other hand, our dross is gold.

What is done with this golden dung? It is swept into the abyss.

We send, at great expense, fleets of ships, to collect the guano of petrels and penguins at the southern pole, and cast into the sea the incalculable element of wealth which we have under our hand. All the human and animal manure which the world wastes, if returned to the land, instead of being thrown into the sea, would suffice to nourish the world.

Those piles of ordure collected at street corners, those carts of mud jolted at night through the streets, those frightful barrels of the night-man, those fetid streams of subterranean mire which the pavement conceals from you,— do you know what they are? They are the flowering field, the green grass, the mint and thyme and sage, the game, the cattle, the satisfied lowing of fat oxen at night, the perfumed hay, the golden wheat, the bread on your table, the warm blood in your veins, health, joy, life. Such is the pleasure of that mysterious creation, which is transformation on earth and transfiguration in heaven.

Restore this to the great crucible; your abundance will flow from it. The nutrition of the plains produces the nourishment of men.

You are at liberty to waste this wealth, and to consider me ridiculous into the bargain. That would be the masterpiece of your ignorance.

Statistics have calculated that France alone pours every year a sum of half a milliard into the Atlantic, through the mouths of her rivers. Note this: these five hundred millions would pay one-quarter of the expenses of the budget. The cleverness of man is so great that he prefers to get rid of these five hundred millions in the gutter. The very substance of the people is borne away, here drop by drop, and there in streams, by the wretched vomiting of our sewers into the rivers, and the gigantic outpour of our rivers into the ocean. Every hiccough of our sewers costs us one thousand

francs. This has two results; the earth is impoverished and the water poisoned. Hunger rises from the furrow and sickness from the river.

It is notorious, for instance, that at this very hour the Thames poisons London.

As regards Paris, it has been found necessary of late, to remove most of the mouths of the sewers down the river, below the last bridge.

A double tubular apparatus, supplied with valves and sluices, sucking up and driving back,— a system of elementary drainage as simple as the human lungs, and which is already in full working order in several English parishes,— would suffice to bring the pure water of the fields into our towns, and to send back to the fields the rich water of the towns; and this easy ebb and flow, the simplest in the world, would retain among us the five hundred millions now thrown away. People's minds are fixed on other things.

The present process does mischief, while meaning well. The intention is good, but the result is melancholy. Meaning to drain the city, the population is destroyed. A sewer is a mistake. When drainage, with its double function, restoring what it takes, is everywhere substituted for the sewer, that simple and impoverishing scouring, then, this being also combined with the data of a new social economy, the products of the earth will be increased tenfold, and the problem of misery will be singularly lessened. Add the suppression of parasitic growths, and it will be solved.

Meantime, the public wealth flows into the river, and leakage takes place. Leakage is the right word. Europe is being ruined in this way by exhaustion.

As for France, we have given its figures. Now, as Paris contains one twenty-fifth of the whole French population, and as Parisian guano is the richest of all, we understate the truth when we estimate at twenty-five millions the loss of Paris in the half-milliard which France annually refuses. These twenty-five millions, employed in assistance and enjoyment, would double the splendour of Paris. The city ex-

pends them in sewers. So that we may say, the great prodigality of Paris, its marvellous holiday attire, its Folie Beaujon, its revels, its lavish expenditure of gold, its luxury, pomp, and magnificence, is its system of sewers.

It is in this way that in the blindness of a bad political economy we drain the well-being of all, and allow it to float down stream and be lost in the abyss. There ought to be St. Cloud nets to catch the public fortunes.

Economically considered, the fact may be summed up thus: Paris is a sieve. Paris, that model city, that pattern of well-conducted capitals, of which every nation strives to take a copy, that metropolis of the ideal, that august land of initiative impulse and experiment, that centre and abode of intellect, that nation-city, that hive of the future, that marvellous combination of Babylon and Corinth, would make a peasant of Fo-Kian shrug his shoulders, from the point of view which we have just indicated.

Imitate Paris, and you will be ruined. Moreover, and particularly in this immemorial and insensate squandering, Paris is itself an imitator.

These surprising follies are not new; this is no youthful nonsense. The ancients acted like the moderns. "The sewers of Rome," says Liebig, "absorbed the entire welfare of the Roman peasant." When the Campagna of Rome was ruined by the Roman sewers, Rome exhausted Italy; and when she had placed Italy in her cloaca, she poured in Sicily, then Sardinia, then Africa. The sewers of Rome swallowed up the world.

This cesspool offered its gaping maw to the city and to the universe,— *Urbi et orbi.* Eternal city, unfathomable sewer.

In these things, as in others, Rome sets the example.

This example, Paris follows with all the folly peculiar to cities of talent.

For the requirements of the operation which we have just explained, Paris has beneath it another Paris,— a Paris of sewers which has its streets, cross-roads, blind-alleys, its

squares, arteries, and its circulation, which is of mud, and minus the human form.

For nothing should be flattered, not even a great people. Where there is everything, ignominy exists side by side with sublimity; and if Paris contains Athens, the city of light, Tyre, the city of power, Sparta, the city of valour and virtue, Nineveh, the city of marvels, it also contains Lutetia, the city of mud.

Moreover, the stamp of its power is there too; and the Titanic sink of Paris realizes among its monuments that strange ideal realized in humanity by such men as Machiavelli, Bacon, and Mirabeau,— abject grandeur.

The subsoil of Paris, if the eye could pierce the surface, would present the aspect of a gigantic madrepore. A sponge has not more passages and holes than the heap of earth, six leagues in circumference, upon which the grand old city rests. To say nothing of the catacombs, which are a separate cellar, to say nothing of the inextricable net-work of gas-pipes, not to mention the vast tubular system for the distribution of fresh water, which leads to the pillar fountains, the drains alone form on either bank of the river a prodigious dark ramification, a labyrinth which has its incline for its clew.

In the damp mist of this labyrinth appears the rat, which seems the product to which Paris has given birth.

CHAPTER II

ANCIENT HISTORY OF THE SEWER

IF we imagine Paris lifted off like a cover, the subterranean net-work of drains, seen from a bird's-eye view, will represent on either bank a sort of large branch grafted upon the river. On the right bank, the encircling sewer will form

the trunk of this branch, the secondary pipes the branches, and those without issue the twigs.

This figure is only a summary one and half correct, as the right angle, which is the usual angle in subterranean ramifications of this kind, is very rare in Nature.

Our readers will form a better image of this strange geometric plan by supposing that they see some strange Oriental alphabet against a dark background, as intricate as a thicket, the shapeless letters welded together in apparent confusion, and, as if accidentally, now by their angles, and now by their ends.

Sewers and sinks played a great part in the Middle Ages, under the Lower Empire and in the ancient Orient. Plague sprang from them, and despots died of them. The masses regarded these beds of corruption, these monstrous cradles of death, with an almost religious awe. The vermin-ditch at Benares is not more productive of vertigo than the Lion's den at Babylon.

Tiglath-Pileser, according to the rabbinical books, swore by the sink of Nineveh. It was from the drain of Munster that John of Leyden produced his false moon; and it was from the cesspool-well of Kekhscheb that his Oriental double, Mokanna, the veiled prophet of Korassan, made his false sun emerge.

The history of men is reflected in the history of the sewers. The Gemoniæ [1] narrated the story of Rome. The drain of Paris is an old and fearful thing. It has been a sepulchre, and it has been an asylum. Crime, intellect, social protest, liberty of conscience, thought, theft, all that human laws pursue or have pursued, have hidden in this hole,— the Maillotins,[2] in the fourteenth century, the cloak-twitchers in the fifteenth, the Huguenots in the sixteenth, the Illuminati of

[1] Steps on the Aventine Hill, leading to the Tiber, from which the bodies of criminals were thrown into the river.

[2] A party who attacked the arsenal, armed with mallets (*maillots*), slew the jailers and freed the prisoners, in protest against additional taxes levied during the minority of Charles VI.

Morin [3] in the seventeenth, and the Chauffeurs [4] in the eighteenth. One hundred years ago the nocturnal dagger issued from it, the pickpocket in danger glided into it. The forest had its cave, Paris had its drain. The Truanderie (vagrancy), that Gallic *picareria,* accepted the drain as an annex of the Court of Miracles, and at night, cunning and ferocious, entered by the Maubuée outlet, as into a bed-chamber.

It was very natural that those who had for the scene of their daily toil the Vide-Gousset (empty pocket) lane, or the Rue Coupe-Gorge (cutthroat), should have for their nightly abode, the culvert of the Chemin-Vert, or the Hurepoix catch-basin. Hence a swarm of memories. All sorts of phantoms haunt those long, lonely corridors. On all sides are putridity and miasma; and here and there are traps through which Villon inside converses with Rabelais outside.

The drain, in old Paris, is the meeting-place of all exhaustions and of all experiments. Political economy regards it as detritus, and social philosophy as residuum.

The drain is the conscience of the city. Everything converges and is confronted there. In this livid spot there are shadows, but there are no secrets. Everything has its true form, or at least its final form. The pile of ordure has this in its favour, that it tells no lies. Simplicity has taken refuge there. Basile's mask is there; but you see the pasteboard, the threads, the inside as well as the out, and it is marked with honest filth. Scapin's false nose is its next neighbour. All the uncleanness of civilization, when no longer of service, fall into this trench of truth, where the vast social scale ends. They are swallowed up, but display themselves there. This random mixture is a confession. There no false appearances or plastering is possible; filth takes off its shirt. There is an absolute nudity, a rout of illusions and mirage; there is nothing but what actually exists, as-

[3] A French fanatic sentenced to be burned alive in 1663 for having prophesied the death of the king.

[4] A band of felons, who, about 1794–5, burned the soles of their victims' feet, to make them confess where they kept their money. Hence the name Chauffeur (Stoker).

suming the ill-omened aspect of that which is over and done with. Reality and disappearance. There, a bottle-heel confesses intoxication, a basket-handle tells of domesticity; there, the apple-core which has had literary opinions once again becomes an apple-core; the effigy on the double sou grows frankly verdigrised; the saliva of Caiaphas meets the vomit of Falstaff; the louis d'or which comes from the gambling hell jostles against the nail whence hangs the end of the suicide's rope; a livid fœtus rolls by wrapped in spangles which danced at the opera last Shrove Tuesday; a wig which has sentenced men, wallows by the side of a mass of rottenness which was once Margoton's petticoat. It is more than fraternity; it is the extremest familiarity. All that was painted is bedaubed. The last veil is torn away. A sewer is a cynic. It tells everything.

This sincerity of foulness pleases us, and rests the mind. When a man has spent his time upon the earth in enduring the lofty airs assumed by state reasons, the oath, political wisdom, human justice, professional probity, austerities of situation, and incorruptible robes, it is a relief to enter a sewer and see the mud which befits it.

This is at the same time instructive. As we said just now, history passes through the drain. The St. Bartholomews filter through there drop by drop, through the paving-stones. Great public assassinations, political and religious butcheries, traverse this subterranean passage of civilization, and thrust their corpses into it. The eye of the dreamer sees all historical murderers there, in the hideous gloom, on their knees, with a bit of their winding-sheet for an apron, mournfully sponging out their work. Louis XI. is there with Tristan; Francis I. is there with Duprat; Charles IX. is there with his mother; Richelieu is there with Louis XIII.; Louvois is there; Letellier is there; Hébert and Maillard are there, scratching the stones, and trying to efface the traces of their deeds. The brooms of those spectres are heard beneath those arches. The vast fetidness of social catastrophes fills the air. We see a red glimmer in corners. A terrible current flows there, in which blood-stained hands have been washed.

The social observer should enter these shadows. They are part of his laboratory. Philosophy is the microscope of thought. Everything strives to fly from it, but nothing escapes it. Subterfuge is useless. What side of himself does a man show in subterfuge and evasion? His shameful side. Philosophy pursues evil with its upright glance, and does not allow it to escape into nothingness. It recognizes everything in the effacement of things which disappear, and in the diminution of things which vanish. It reconstructs the purple from the rags, and the woman from the tatters. From the cesspool it reconstructs the town; from the mud it reconstructs manners. From the potsherd it infers the amphora or the jug. It recognizes from the mark of a finger-nail on a parchment the difference which separates the Jewry of the Juden-gasse from the Jewry of the Ghetto. It recovers in what is left that which has been,— good, evil, falsehood, truth, the spot of blood from the palace, the ink-stain from the cavern, the tallow-drop from the brothel, trials undergone, temptations welcomed, orgies vomited up, the shape which characters have assumed as they became abased, the traces of prostitution in souls whose coarseness rendered them capable of it, and on the vestment of the porters of Rome the mark of Messalina's familiarity.

CHAPTER III

BRUNESEAU

THE drain of Paris in the Middle Ages was legendary. In the sixteenth century, Henri II. attempted soundings which failed. Not a hundred years ago, as Mercier testifies, the sewer was abandoned to itself, and became what it could.

Such was that ancient Paris, given over to quarrels, indecisions, and groping. It was stupid enough for a long

time. Later on, '89 showed how cities acquire sense; but in the good old times, the capital had but little head. It did not know how to manage its affairs, either morally or materially, and could no more sweep away its filth than its abuses. Everything was an obstacle, everything raised a question. The sewer, for instance, was refractory to every itinerary. People could find their way under the city no better than they could in it. Above, everything was unintelligible; below, inextricable. Beneath the confusion of tongues was the confusion of cellars; Dædalus duplicated with Babel.

Sometimes the drain of Paris saw fit to overflow, as if this misunderstood Nile had suddenly fallen into a passion. There were, infamous to relate, inundations of the drain. At moments, this stomach of civilization digested badly, the sewer flowed back into the throat of the city, and Paris got an after-taste of her own filth. These resemblances of the drain to remorse had good points; they were warnings,—very badly received, however. The city was indignant that its mud should be so bold, and did not admit that filth should return. Get rid of it better.

The flood of 1802 is one of the actual memories of Parisians of eighty years of age. The mud spread across the Place des Victoires, where the statue of Louis XIV. stands; it entered the Rue St. Honoré by the two mouths of the Champs Elysées drain, Rue St. Florentin by the St. Florentin drain, Rue Pierre à Poisson by the Sonnerie drain, Rue Popincourt by the Chemin-Vert drain, and Rue de la Roquette by the Rue de Lappe drain. It rose above the curbstones of the Rue des Champs Elysées to a height of fourteen inches; and to the south, through the vomitory of the Seine, which performed its duties in a contrary sense, it entered Rue Mazarine, Rue de l'Echaudé, and Rue du Marias, where it stopped, after running on a hundred and twenty yards, just a few yards from the house where Racine once lived, respecting, in the seventeenth century, the poet more than the king. It reached its maximum depth in the Rue St. Pierre, where it rose three

feet above the gutter, and its maximum extent in the Rue St. Sabine, where it spread over a length of two hundred and fifty yards.

At the beginning of the present century the drain of Paris was still a mysterious spot. Mud can never enjoy good fame, but here the evil reputation extended almost to terror. Paris knew confusedly that it had beneath it a grewsome cave. People talked of it as of that monstrous cesspool of Thebes, in which centipedes fifteen feet long swarmed, and which might have served as a bathing-place for Behemoth. The heavy boots of the sewer-men never ventured beyond certain well-known points. It was still close upon the time when the scavengers' carts, from the top of which St. Foix fraternized with the Marquis de Créqui, were unloaded directly into the drain. As for the cleansing, that duty was intrusted to the showers, which choked up rather than swept away. Rome left some poetry to her cloaca, and called it the Gemoniæ; Paris insulted its own, and called it the stench-hole. Science and superstition were agreed as to the horror. The stench-hole was quite as distasteful to hygiene as to legend. The hobgoblin monk first saw the light under the fetid arches of the Mouffetard drain; the corpses of the Marmousets were thrown into the Barillerie drain. Fagon attributed the maligant fever of 1685 to the great hiatus in the Marais drain, which remained yawning until 1833 in the Rue St. Louis, nearly opposite the sign of the Gallant Messenger. The mouth of the drain in the Rue de la Mortellerie was celebrated for the pestilences which originated from it; with its iron-pointed grating that resembled a row of teeth, it gaped in that fatal street, like the throat of some dragon breathing hell on mankind. The popular imagination seasoned the gloomy Parisian sewer with some hideous mixture of infinitude. The drain was bottomless. The drain was a Barathrum. The idea of exploring those leprous regions never even occurred to the police. Who would have dared to cast a plummet into that darkness, to go on a voyage of discovery in that abyss? It was frightful. And yet

some one presented himself at last. The cloaca had its Christopher Columbus.

One day, in 1805, during one of the rare apparitions which the Emperor made in Paris, the Minister of the Interior, some Decés or Crètet or other, attended his master's levee. In the courtyard clattered the swords of all those extraordinary soldiers of the great republic and the great empire; there was a swarm of heroes at Napoleon's gates,— men from the Rhine, the Scheldt, the Adige, and the Nile; comrades of Joubert, of Desaix, of Marceau, Hoche, and Kleber; aeronauts from Fleurus, grenadiers from Mayence, pontoon builders from Genoa, hussars on whom the Pyramids had looked down, artillery-men who had been bespattered by Junot's cannon-balls, cuirassiers who had taken by assault the fleet anchored in the Zuyder-Zee; some had followed Bonaparte upon the bridge of Lodi; others had accompanied Murat in the trenches of Mantua, while others had outstripped Lannes in the sunken road of Montebello. The whole army of that day was there, in the court of the Tuileries, represented by a squadron or a company, and guarding Napoleon in repose; and that was the splendid period when the great army had Marengo behind it and Austerlitz before it. "Sire," said the Minister of the Interior to Napoleon, "I saw yesterday the most daring man in your empire." "What man was that?" asked the Emperor sharply, "and what has he done?" "He wishes to do something, sire." "What?" "To visit the Paris sewers."

That man existed, and his name was Bruneseau.

CHAPTER IV

UNKNOWN DETAILS

THE visit took place. It was a fearful campaign,— a nocturnal battle against asphyxia and plague. It was at the same time a voyage of discovery. One of the survivors of this expedition, an intelligent workman, every young at that time, still recounted a few years ago curious details which Bruneseau thought it right to omit in his report to the Prefect of Police, as unworthy of official style. Disinfecting processes were extremely rudimentary at that day. Bruneseau had scarcely passed the first articulations of that subterranean net-work, when eight workmen out of twenty refused to go farther. The operation was complicated; the visit entailed cleansing. It was therefore necessary to cleanse and at the same time to take measurements; to note the water entrances, count the traps and outlets, trace the branches, indicate the currents at points where they divided, define the respective dimensions of the different basins, sound the small sewers grafted on the main sewer, measure the height under the key-stone of each passage, and the width both at the bottom and the top, in order to determine the arrangements in regard to the level for each affluent from the sewer and from the street. They advanced with difficulty. It was not rare for the ladders to sink into three feet of mud. The lanterns burned dim in the mephitic atmosphere. From time to time, a sewer-man was carried away in a fainting state. At certain spots there was a precipice. The soil had given way, the flag-stones had crumbled, and the drain was converted into a bottomless pit; nothing solid could be found. A man disappeared suddenly and they had great difficulty in dragging him out. By the advice of Fourcroy, large cages filled with tow saturated with resin were set on fire, at regular intervals, in spots sufficiently disinfected. The wall was cov-

ered in places with shapeless fungi which might have been called tumors; the stone itself seemed sick in this unbreathable atmosphere.

Bruneseau, in his exploration, proceeded down-hill. At the point where the two water-pipes of the Grand Hurleur separate he deciphered on a projecting stone the date 1550; this stone indicated the limit where Philibert Delorme charged by Henri II. to inspect the subterranean sewers of Paris, stopped. This stone was the mark of the sixteenth century in the drain. Bruneseau found the handiwork of the seventeenth century in the Ponceau conduit and in that of the Rue Vieille du Temple, which were arched between 1600 and 1650, and the handiwork of the eighteenth century in the west section of the collecting canal, enclosed and arched in 1740. These two arches, especially the more recent one, that of 1740, were more decrepit and cracked than the masonry of the belt drain, which dated from 1412,— the period when the Menilmontant stream of fresh water was raised to the dignity of the Great Sewer of Paris, a promotion analogous to that of a peasant who should become first valet to the king; something like Gros-Jean transformed into Lebel.

They fancied they recognized here and there, especially under the Palais de Justice, the hollows of antique dungeons dug out of the drain itself,— hideous *in pace.* An iron collar hung in one of these cells. They were all bricked up. A few of the things found were peculiar; among others, the skeleton of an ourang-outang, which disappeared from the Jardin des Plantes in 1800,— a disappearance probably connected with the famous and indisputable apparition of the devil in the Rue des Bernardins, in the last year of the eighteenth century. The poor animal was finally drowned in the drain.

Under the long vaulted passage leading to the Arche-Marion, a rag-picker's basket in a perfect state of preservation excited the admiration of connoisseurs. Everywhere, the mud, which the sewer-men had learned to handle boldly, abounded in precious objects,— gold and silver, jewelry,

precious stones, coins. A giant who had filtered this cloaca would have found in his sieve the wealth of centuries. At the point where the two branches of the Rue du Temple and the Rue St. Avoye divide, a singular Huguenot medal made of copper was picked up, bearing on one side a pig wearing a cardinal's hat, and on the other a wolf with the tiara on its head.

The most surprising discovery was at the entrance of the Great Sewer. This entrance was formerly closed by a grating of which only the hinges now remained. From one of these hinges hung a filthy, shapeless rag, which doubtless caught there as it passed, floated in the shadow, and gradually mouldered away. Bruneseau raised his lantern and examined this fragment. It was a very fine cambric, and in one corner, less tattered than the rest, they made out a heraldic coronet embroidered above these seven letters, LAUBESP. The coronet was that of a marquis, and the seven letters signified *Laubespine*. They recognized that they had before them a piece of Marat's winding-sheet. Marat, in his youth, had love affairs, at the time when he was attached to the household of the Count d'Artois in the capacity of physician to the stables. Of these love affairs with a great lady, which are historically notorious, he retained this sheet as a waif or a souvenir. On his death, as it was the only fine linen in his possession, he was buried in it. Old women wrapped the tragic friend of the people for the tomb in this sheet wherein he had known pleasure. Bruneseau passed on. The rag was left where it was. It was not destroyed. Was it through contempt or respect? Marat deserved both. And then, destiny was so stamped upon it that they hesitated to touch it. Moreover, things of the sepulchre should be left in the resting-place which they select. Altogether, the relic was a strange one. A marchioness had slept in it; Marat had rotted in it; it had passed through the Pantheon to end with the sewer-rats. This rag from an alcove, every crease in which Watteau would once have joyfully painted, ended by becoming worthy of the intent gaze of Dante.

The whole visit to the loathsome subways of Paris lasted seven years,— from 1805 to 1812. As he advanced, Bruneseau designed, directed, and carried out considerable operations. In 1808, he lowered the floor of the Ponceau drain, and creating new lines everywhere, he carried the sewer, in 1809, under the Rue St. Denis as far as the Fountain of the Innocents; in 1810, under the Rue Froidmanteau and the Salpetrière; in 1811, under the Rue Neuve des Petits Pères, under the Rue du Mail, the Rue de l'Echarpe and the Place Royale; in 1812, under the Rue de la Paix and the Chaussée d'Antin. At the same time, he disinfected and cleansed the entire network. In the second year he called his son-in-law Nargaud to his assistance.

It was thus that, at the beginning of this century, ancient society flushed its subway and performed the toilet of its drain. It was so much cleaned, at any rate.

Winding, cracked, unpaved, full of pits, intersected by fissures, jolted by odd elbows, rising and falling illogically, fetid, savage, ferocious, submerged in darkness, with cicatrices on its stones and scars on its walls, grewsome,— such was the old sewer of Paris, retrospectively regarded. Ramifications in all directions, crossings of trenches, branches, crows-feet, stars as in military mines, blind guts and alleys, arches covered with saltpetre, pestiferous pools, scabby exudations on the walls, drops falling from the roof, darkness,— nothing could equal the horror of this old excremental crypt; the digestive apparatus of Babylon, a den, a ditch, a gulf pierced with streets, a Titanic mole-hill, in which the mind fancies that it sees, crawling in the shadows, amid the ordure which once was splendour, that enormous blind mole, the past.

Such, we repeat, was the sewer of the olden time.

CHAPTER V

PRESENT PROGRESS

TO-DAY the sewer is clean, cold, straight, correct. It almost realizes the ideal of what is understood in England by the word "respectable." It is neat and gray; built with the plumb-line. We might almost say it looks as if it had just come out of a bandbox. It resembles a contractor who has become a Councillor of State. You almost see distinctly there. The mud behaves itself decently. At the first glance, you might be inclined to take it for one of those subterranean passages once so common, and so useful for the flights of monarchs and princes, in the good old times "when the people loved their kings." The present sewer is a handsome sewer; pure style prevails there; the classic rectilinear Alexandrine, which, expelled from poetry, appears to have taken refuge in architecture, seems blended with all the stones of that long, dark, and whitish vault; each outlet is an arcade; the Rue de Rivoli sets the fashion even in the sewer. However, if the geometric line be in place anywhere, it is assuredly so in the sewerage pipe of a great city, where everything should be subordinated to the shortest road. The sewer has, at the present day, assumed a certain official aspect. The very police reports, of which it sometimes forms the subject, are no longer lacking in respect for it. The words which characterize it in administrative language are lofty and dignified: what used to be called a gut is now a gallery, and what used to be a hole is now an orifice. Villon would no longer recognize old temporary lodgings. This net-work of cellars still has its population of rodents swarming more thickly than ever. From time to time, a rat, an old veteran, ventures his head at the opening of the drain and examines the Parisians; but even these vermin are growing tame, so satisfied are they with their subterranean palace. The cloaca no longer retains its

primitive ferocity. The rain, which in olden times sullied the drain, now washes it. Still, do not trust to it too much. Miasmas still inhabit it. It is hypocritical rather than irreproachable. In spite of all the prefecture of police and the board of health have done, in spite of disinfecting processes, it exhales a vague, suspicious odour, like Tartuffe after confession.

Still, we must allow that, taking it all together, this sweeping and cleaning is an homage which the sewer pays to civilization; and as from this point of view Tartuffe' conscience is an improvement upon the Augean stables, it is certain that the Paris sewers have been improved.

It is more than progress; it is transmutation. Between the old and the new sewer there is a revolution.

Who affected this revolution? The man whom every one forgets, and whom we have named,— Bruneseau.

CHAPTER VI

FUTURE PROGRESS

TO dig the sewer of Paris was no small task. The last ten centuries have toiled at it without being able to finish it, any more than they have succeeded in finishing Paris. The sewer, in fact, receives all the consequences of the growth of Paris. It is, within the earth, a sort of dark polypus with a thousand antennæ, which grows below, as the city expands above. Every time that the city builds a street, the sewer stretches out an arm. The old monarchy constructed only twenty-three thousand three hundred metres of drain; Paris reached that point on January 1, 1806. Beginning with this period, to which we shall presently revert, the work was usefully and energetically taken up and continued. Napoleon built — the figures are curious — four thousand eight hun-

dred and four metres; Charles X., ten thousand eight hundred and thirty-six; Louis Philippe, eighty-nine thousand and twenty; the Republic of 1848, twenty-three thousand three hundred and eighty-one; the present government, seventy thousand five hundred; altogether, two hundred and twenty-six thousand six hundred metres, or sixty leagues, of sewer,— the enormous entrails of Paris; an obscure ramification constantly at work; an unknown and immense construction.

As we see, the subterranean labyrinth of Paris is, at the present day, more than tenfold what it was at the beginning of the century. It is not easy to conceive all the perseverance and all the efforts required to raise this cesspool to the point of relative perfection at which it now is. It was with great difficulty that the old monarchical provosts, and, during the last ten years of the eighteenth century, the revolutionary mayors, succeeded in boring the five leagues of drains which existed prior to 1806. All sorts of obstacles impeded this operation,— some peculiar to the nature of the soil, others inherent in the prejudices of the working population of Paris. Paris is built on a soil which is strangely rebellious to the pick, the hoe, the borer, and to human manipulation. Nothing is harder to pierce and penetrate than the geological formation on which the marvellous historical formation called Paris is superposed; so soon as labour in any shape is attempted and ventures into this layer of alluvium, subterranean resistances abound. There are liquid clays, running springs, hard rocks, and those soft, deep quagmires which special science calls "mustard." The pick advances laboriously through the calcareous layers alternating with very thin veins of clay and schistose strata incrusted with oyster-shells, contemporaries of the pre-Adamite oceans. Sometimes a rivulet suddenly bursts into a tunnel just begun, and inundates the workmen; or a bed of marl is exposed and rushes forward with the fury of a cataract, breaking the strongest supporting beams like glass. Very recently, at La Villette, when it was found necessary to carry the collecting sewer under the St. Martin canal without interrupting navigation

or letting off the water, a fissure formed in the bed of the canal, and water poured suddenly into the tunnel, mocking at all the efforts of the draining pumps; it was found necessary to employ a diver to seek for the fissure, which was in the mouth of the great basin; and it was with great difficulty stopped up. Elsewhere, near the Seine, and even at some distance from the river, as, for instance, at Belleville, Grand Rue, and the Passage Lunière, quick-sands are found, in which men have been swallowed up. Add suffocation by miasmas, burial by slides, and sudden crumbling of the soil. Add typhus, too, with which the workmen are slowly impregnated. In our day, after having dug the gallery of Clichy, with a foot-path to receive the main water-conduit of the Ourque, a job executed in a trench ten metres in depth; after having arched the Bièvre from the Boulevard de l'Hôpital to the Seine, in the midst of earth-slips and by the aid of excavations, often through putrid matter, and of shores; after having, in order to deliver Paris from the torrent-like waters of Montmarte, and to provide an outlet for the river-like pond twenty-three acres in extent, which stagnated near the Barrière des Martyrs; after having, we say, constructed the line of sewers from the Barrière Blanche to the Aubervilliers road, in four months, by working day and night, at a depth of eleven metres; after having made a subterraneous sewer, in the Rue Barre du Bec, at a depth of six metres without a cutting — a thing unknown before,— the surveyor, Monnot, died. After arching three thousand metres of sewer in all parts of the city, from the Rue Traversière Saint Antoine to the Rue de l'Ourcine; after having by means of the Arbalète branch, freed the Censier-Mouffetard cross-roads from pluvial inundations; after having constructed the St. George's drain in liquid sand upon rubble and concrete; and after having directed the tremendous task of lowering the floor of the Notre Dame de Nazareth branch,— the engineer, Duleau, died. There are no bulletins for such acts of bravery as these, which are more useful, however, than the brutal butchery of battle-fields.

The sewers of Paris, in 1832, were far from being what they now are. Bruneseau had given the impulse, but the cholera was required to bring about the vast reconstruction which has taken place since. It is surprising to learn, for instance, that in 1821 a portion of the belt-sewer, called the Grand Canal, as at Venice, still stood stagnating, open to the sky, in the Rue des Gourdes. It was not till 1823 that the city of Paris found in its pocket the two hundred and sixty-six thousand and eighty francs, and six centimes, needed to cover in this turpitude. The three absorbing wells of the Combat, La Cunette, and St. Mandè with their drains, machinery, cesspools, and ventilating pipes, merely date from 1836. The intestinal canal of Paris has been remade, and, as we said, augmented more than tenfold during the last quarter of a century.

Thirty years ago, at the period of the insurrection of June 5 and 6, it was still, in many parts, almost the same old sewer. A great number of streets, now convex, were at that time broken causeways. There were frequently seen, at the foot of a hill where tributaries of streets and squares ended, large square gratings, whose iron glistened, polished by the constant passage of the crowd, dangerous and slippery for vehicles, and throwing horses down. The official language of the department of Roads and Bridges gave to these gratings the expressive name of *Cassis*.[1] In 1832, in a number of streets — Rue de l'Etoile, Rue St. Louis, Rue du Temple, Rue Vieille du Temple, Rue Notre Dame de Nazareth, Rue Folie Méricourt, Quai aux Fleurs, Rue du Petit Musc, Rue de Normandie, Rue Pont aux Biches, Rue des Marais, Faubourg St. Martin, Rue Notre Dame des Victoires, Faubourg Montmarte, Rue Grange Batelière, in the Champs Elysées, the Rue Jacob, and the Rue de Tournon — the old Gothic cloaca still cynically displayed its throats. They were enormous stone orifices sometimes surrounded by stone posts, with monumental effrontery.

Paris, in 1806, was much in the same state as regards

[1] Neck-breakers.

drains as in May, 1663; five thousand three hundred and twenty-eight fathoms. After Bruneseau, on January 1, 1832, there were forty thousand three hundred metres. From 1806 to 1831 seven hundred and fifty metres were, on an average, constructed annually; since then, eight and even ten thousand metres have been built every year, in masonry of rubble with a coating of hydraulic mortar, which hardens under water, on a concrete foundation. At two hundred francs the metre, the sixty leagues of sewers in the Paris of to-day represent forty-eight million francs.

In addition to the economic progress to which we alluded at the outset, serious considerations as to the public health are connected with that immense question,— the drainage of Paris.

Paris lies between two sheets,— a sheet of water and a sheet of air. The sheet of water, lying at a tolerably great depth under ground, but already tapped by two borings, is supplied by the stratum of green sandstone situated between the chalk and the Jurassic limestone; this stratum may be represented by a disk with a radius of twenty-five leagues. A multitude of rivers and streams drip into it. We drink the Seine, the Marne, the Yonne, the Oisin, the Aisne, the Cher, the Vienne, and the Loire in a glass of water from the Grenelle well. The sheet of water is salubrious; it comes from the sky first, and then from the earth. The sheet of air is unwholesome; it comes from the sewer. All the miasmas of the cesspool are mingled with the breath of the city; hence this bad breath. The atmosphere taken from above a dungheap, as has been scientifically proved, is purer than the atmosphere taken from over Paris. Within a given time, by the aid of progress, machinery being perfected, and enlightenment increasing, the sheet of water will be employed to purify the sheet of air,— that is to say, to wash the sewer. It is understood that, by washing the sewer, we mean restoring the ordure to the earth,— returning dung to the arable lands, and manure to the fields. This simple act will cause diminution of wretchedness and an augmentation of health for the whole social

community. At the present hour the radiation of disease from Paris extends for fifty leagues round,— the Louvre taken as the hub of this pestilential wheel.

We might say that, for the last ten centuries, the cesspool has been the disease of Paris. The sewer is the defect which the city has in its blood. The popular instinct has never been deceived. The trade of the sewer-man was formerly almost as dangerous and almost as repulsive to the people as that of the knacker, which was so long regarded with horror and left to the hangman. High wages were required to induce a bricklayer to disappear in that fetid mire; the ladder of the well-digger hesitated to plunge into it; it was said, proverbially, "Going into the sewer is entering the tomb;" and all sorts of hideous legends, as we have said, clothed this colossal sink with terrors. It is a fearful sink-hole which bears traces of the revolutions of the globe as well as the revolutions of man, and where vestiges may be found of every cataclysm, from the shells of the Deluge to the ragged sheet of Marat.

BOOK III

MUD, BUT SOUL

CHAPTER I

THE SEWER AND ITS SURPRISES

IT was in the sewer of Paris that Jean Valjean found himself.

There is a further resemblance between Paris and the sea. As in the ocean, the diver may disappear there.

The transition was extraordinary. In the very heart of the city Jean Valjean had left the city, and, in a twinkling, in the time required to lift a trap and let it fall again, he had passed from broad daylight to complete darkness, from midday to midnight, from noise to silence, from the roar of thunder to the stagnation of the tomb, and, by a sudden change of fortune, far more marvellous even than that of the Rue Polonceau, from the extremest peril to the most absolute security.

A sudden fall into a cellar; disappearance into the secret dungeon of Paris; leaving that street where death was imminent on every hand, for this sort of sepulchre where there was life: it was a strange moment. He stood for some seconds as if stunned; listening, bewildered. The waste-trap of safety had suddenly opened beneath him. The bounty of heaven had, to some extent, taken him captive by treachery. Admirable ambuscades of Providence!

Still, the wounded man did not stir, and Jean Valjean did

not know whether that which he had carried into this tomb were alive or dead.

His first sensation was one of blindness. All at once, he could see nothing. He felt too, that in a moment he had become deaf. He could hear nothing more. The frenzied storm of murder let loose a few yards above him, reached him confusedly and indistinctly, as we said, thanks to the thickness of the earth which lay between him and it. It was like an echo in a deep place. He felt that the ground was solid under his feet,— that was all; but that was enough. He stretched out one arm, then the other; he touched the wall on both sides, and found that the passage was narrow. His foot slipped, and he thus learned that the pavement was damp. He advanced one foot cautiously, fearing a hole, a cesspool, or some gulf; he satisfied himself that the pavement continued. A fetid gust told him where he was.

At the expiration of a few minutes he was no longer blind. A little light fell through the man-hole by which he had descended, and his eye grew used to this cavern. He began to distinguish something. The passage in which he had run to earth — no other word expresses the situation better — was walled up behind him. It was one of those blind alleys, called in official language, branches. Before him was another wall,— a wall of night. The light from the man-hole expired ten or twelve feet from the spot where Jean Valjean stood, and scarcely cast a livid pallor on a few yards of the damp walls of the sewer. Beyond that, the darkness was dense; to penetrate it seemed horrible, and to enter it was like being swallowed up. Yet it was possible to bury one's self in that wall of fog; and it must be done. It must even be done quickly. Jean Valjean thought that the grating which he had seen under the stones might also be seen by the troops, and that all depended on this chance. They also might descend into the well and search it. There was not a minute to be lost. He had laid Marius on the ground; he now picked him up,— that is the right word for it,— put him on his shoulders, and set out. He resolutely entered the darkness.

The truth is, that they were less safe than Jean Valjean believed. Perils of another nature, but equally great, perhaps awaited them. After the flashing whirlwind of combat, came the cavern of miasmas and snares; after chaos, the cloaca. Jean Valjean had fallen from one circle of the Inferno into another.

When he had gone fifty yards, he was obliged to stop. A problem presented itself. The passage ran into another gut, which he encountered across his path. Two roads offered themselves. Which should he take? Should he turn to the left or the right? How was he to find his way in this black labyrinth? Ths labyrinth, as we said, has a clew,— that is, its slope. To follow the slope, is to reach the river.

Jean Valjean understood this at once.

He said to himself that he was probably in the sewer of the Markets; that if he turned to the left and followed the incline, he would arrive in a quarter of an hour at some opening on the Seine between the Pont au Change and the Pont Neuf,— that is to say, he would appear in broad daylight in the most crowded part of Paris. Perhaps he might come out at some man-hole at the intersection of streets. Passers-by would be stupefied at seeing two blood-stained men emerge from the ground at their feet. The police would come up; they would be carried off to the nearest guard-room. They would be captured before they had escaped. It would be better, therefore, to plunge into the labyrinth, to confide in the darkness, and leave the issue to Providence.

He went up the incline and turned to the right.

When he had turned the corner of the gallery, the distant glimmer of light from the trap disappeared, the curtain of darkness again fell on him, and he became blind once more. For all that, he advanced as rapidly as he could. Marius's arms were passed around his neck, and his feet hung down behind. Jean Valjean held both of Marius's arms with one hand, and groped along the wall with the other. Marius's cheek touched his and was glued to it, as it was bloody. He felt a warm stream which came from Marius drip on him and soak

through his clothing. But a moist warmth on his ear, which touched the wounded man's mouth, indicated respiration, and consequently life. The passage along which Jean Valjean was now walking was not so narrow as the first. He advanced with some difficulty. The rain of the previous night had not yet run off, and formed a small torrent in the centre of the floor; and he was forced to hug the wall in order to keep his feet out of water.

He went on thus darkly, resembling some being of the night groping in the invisible, and lost below the earth in veins of gloom.

Still, by degrees, whether because distant gratings sent a little flickering light into this opaque mist, or because his eyes had grown accustomed to the obscurity, he regained some vague vision, and began to get a confused glimpse now of the wall which he touched, and now of the vault under which he was passing. The pupil dilates in the dark, and eventually finds daylight there, just as the soul dilates in misfortune and eventually finds God there.

To direct his course was difficult.

The line of the sewers repeats, as it were, the line of the streets which lie above them. There were in Paris, at that day, two thousand two hundred streets. Picture to yourself beneath them that forest of dark branches called the sewer. The system of drains existing at that time, if placed end to end, would have given a length of eleven leagues. We have already said that the present net-work, owing to the special activity of the last thirty years, is no less than sixty leagues in length.

Jean Valjean began by making a mistake. He fancied that he was under the Rue St. Denis, and it was unlucky that he was not. Under that street there is an old stone drain, dating from the time of Louis XIII., which runs straight to the collecting sewer, called the Great Sewer, with only one turn, on the right, on the level of the old Court of Miracles, and a single branch, the St. Martin sewer, whose four arms form a cross. But the gut of the Petite Truanderie, whose en-

trance was near the Corinth wine-shop, never communicated with the sewer of the Rue St. Denis; it ends at the Montmartre drain, and that was where Jean Valjean now was. There, opportunities for getting lost abound. The Montmarte drain is one of the most labyrinthine of the ancient network. Luckily, Jean Valjean had left behind him the drain of the Markets, whose geometrical plan presents the appearance of a number of entangled topmasts; but he had before him more than one embarrassing encounter, and more than one street-corner — for they are streets — appearing in the darkness like a note of interrogation; first, on his left, the vast Plâtrière sewer, a sort of Chinese puzzle, thrusting forth and intermingling its chaos of *T's* and *Z's* under the Post Office, and under the rotunda of the Corn Market, as far as the Seine, where it terminates in a *Y;* secondly, on his right, the crooked passage of the Rue du Cadran, with its three teeth, which are so many blind alleys; thirdly, on his left, the Mail branch, complicated, almost at the beginning, by a species of fork, and running with repeated zigzags to the great cesspool of the Louvre, which is lopped short and ramified in every direction; and lastly, on his right the blind alley of the Rue des Jeûneurs, to say nothing of other little nooks here and there, before he reached the belt sewer, which alone could lead him to some issue sufficiently distant to be safe.

Had Jean Valjean had any notion of all that we have just stated, he would quickly have perceived, merely by feeling the wall, that he was not in the subterranean gallery of the Rue St. Denis. Instead of the old freestone, instead of the old architecture, haughty and royal even in the sewer, with its floor and string courses of granite and mortar, costing eight hundred livres the fathom, he would have left under his hand modern cheapness, economical expedients, porous stone with hydraulic mortar on a concrete foundation, which costs two hundred francs the metre,— that coarse masonry known as rubble; but he knew nothing of all this.

He advanced anxiously but calmly, seeing nothing, hearing

nothing, plunged into chance,— that is to say, swallowed up in Providence.

By degrees, however, we confess, a certain horror beset him. The shadow which enveloped him took possession of his soul. He walked in an enigma. This aqueduct of the sewer is fearful; it crosses and intersects in a bewildering way. It is a melancholy thing to be caught in this Paris of darkness. Jean Valjean was obliged to find, almost to invent, his road without seeing it. In this unknown region each step that he ventured might be his last. How was he to get out? Should he find an issue? Should he find it in time? Could he pierce and penetrate this colossal subterranean sponge with its channels of stone? Should he meet there some unexpected knot of darkness? Should he come to something inextricable and impassible? Would Marius die of hemorrhage, and himself of hunger? Should they both end by getting lost, and forming two skeletons in a corner of this night? He did not know. He asked himself all these questions, and could not answer them. The intestines of Paris are a precipice. Like the prophet, he was in the monster's belly.

Suddenly he had a surprise. At the most unexpected moment, and without having ceased to walk in a straight line, he perceived that he was no longer ascending; the water of the gutter splashed against his heels instead of coming to his toes. The sewer was now descending; Why? Was he about to reach the Seine suddenly? That danger was great, but the peril of turning back was greater still. He continued to advance.

He was not proceeding toward the Seine. The ridge which the soil of Paris makes on the right bank of the river, empties one of its water-sheds into the Seine, and the other into the Great Sewer. The crest of this ridge, which determines the division of the waters, describes a most capricious line. The highest point, which is at the spot where the drainage separates, is in the St. Avoye sewer, beyond the Rue Michel-le-comte, in the Louvre sewer, near the boulevards, and in the Montmartre drain near the Markets. This highest point Jean

Valjean had reached. He was proceeding toward the belt sewer; he was on the right road. But he knew it not.

Every time that he came to a branch, he felt its corners, and if he found the opening narrower than the passage in which he was, he did not enter, but continued his march, correctly judging that any narrower way must end in a blind alley, and could only lead him farther from his goal,— that is to say, an outlet. He thus avoided the fourfold snare laid for him in the darkness by the four labyrinths which we have enumerated.

At a certain moment he discovered that he was passing from under that part of Paris petrified by the riot, where the barricades had suppressed circulation, and was coming under living and normal Paris. He suddenly heard above his head a sound like thunder, distant but continuous. It was the rumble of vehicles.

He had been walking about half an hour (at least that was the calculation he made), and he had not thought of resting; he had merely changed the hand which supported Marius. The darkness was more profound than ever; but this darkness reassured him.

All at once he saw his shadow before him. It stood out against a faint and almost indistinct red glow which vaguely crimsoned the road-way at his feet and the vault above his head, and glided along the slimy walls of the passage on either hand. He turned his head in amazement, and saw behind him, glistening at a distance which appeared immense, piercing the thick darkness, a sort of horrible star that seemed to be looking at him.

It was the gloomy star of the police rising in the sewer.

Behind this star, nine or ten black, upright, indistinct, and terrible forms moved confusedly.

CHAPTER II

EXPLANATION

ON the day of June 6, a battue of the sewers was ordered. It was feared that the conquered might take refuge in them, and Prefect Gisquet was ordered to search occult Paris, while General Bugeaud swept public Paris,— a double and connected operation, which required double strategy on the part of the public force, represented above by the army and below by the police. Three squads of police agents and sewer-men explored the subway of Paris,— the first, the right bank, the second, the left bank, and the third, the city itself. The police were armed with carbines, bludgeons, swords, and daggers.

That which was at this moment pointed at Jean Valjean was the lantern of the patrol of the right bank.

This patrol had just inspected the winding gallery and the three blind alleys which lie under the Rue du Cadran. While they were throwing their light about those blind alleys, Jean Valjean had encountered the entrance to the gallery, had found that it was narrower than the main gallery, and had not entered it. He passed on. The police, on leaving the Cadran gallery, had fancied that they heard the sound of footsteps in the direction of the belt sewer. They were, indeed, the steps of Jean Valjean. The sergeant in command raised his lantern, and the squad began to peer into the mist in the direction whence the noise came.

This was an indescribable moment for Jean Valjean.

Luckily, if he saw the lantern well, the lantern saw him but ill. It was light, and he was darkness. He was far off, and blended with the darkness of the spot. He hugged the wall and stood still. However, he did not fully understand what it was that moved behind him. Want of sleep and food, and strong emotion, had thrown him into a visionary

state. He saw a flash, and around that flash, spectres. What was it? He did not understand.

When Jean Valjean stopped, the noise ceased.

The police listened, and heard nothing; they looked, and saw nothing. They consulted together.

There was at that period, at this point in the Montmartre drain, a sort of temporary cross-roads, since removed on account of the small inner lake which the torrents of rain formed there in heavy storms. The squad clustered together in this open space. Jean Valjean saw those spectres form a sort of circle. Their bull-dog heads came together and whispered.

The result of this council held by the watch-dogs was, that they were mistaken, that there had been no noise, that there was nobody there, that it was useless to enter the belt sewer, that it would only be a waste of time, but that they must hasten toward St. Merry; for if there was anything to be done and any "bousingot" [1] to be tracked, it would be there.

From time to time parties new-sole there old insults. In 1832, the word *bousingot* formed the transition between the word *jacobin*, no longer current, and the word *demagogue*, then almost unused, and which has since done such excellent service.

The sergeant gave the orders to left-wheel toward the water-shed of the Seine.

Had it occurred to him to divide his men into two squads and go in both directions, Jean Valjean would have been caught. It all hung on that thread. It is probable that the instructions from the Prefecture, foreseeing a chance of a fight with a large body of insurgents, forbade the patrol to part company. The squad set out again, leaving Jean Valjean behind. Of all this movement, he perceived nothing, except the eclipse of the lantern, which was suddenly turned away from him.

[1] *Bousingot:* "a sailor's cap." Name given after the July revolution, to those who affected careless dress and democratic opinions. Also, one who "kicks up a row," "a come-outer."

Before leaving, the sergeant, to satisfy his police conscience, discharged his carbine in the direction of Jean Valjean. The report rolled echoing along the crypt, like the rumbling of those Titanic bowels. A piece of plaster which fell into the gutter and splashed up the water a few yards from Jean Valjean, warned him that the bullet had struck the vault above his head.

Slow and measured steps echoed for some time along the causeway, growing fainter and fainter in the distance; the group of black forms disappeared; a light flickered and floated on the arched roof, forming a ruddy circle, which decreased and disappeared. The silence again became profound, the darkness again became complete, blindness and deafness again took possession of the gloom; and Jean Valjean, not daring to stir, remained for a long time leaning against the wall, with straining ears and dilated pupils, watching the vanishing of that phantom patrol.

CHAPTER III

THE MAN WHO MADE OFF

WE must do the police of that period the justice to say that, even in the gravest public junctures they imperturbably accomplished their duties as inspectors and watchmen. A riot was not, in their eyes, a pretext to give malefactors a loose rein, and to neglect society for the reason that the government was in danger. Their ordinary duties were performed correctly, in addition to the extraordinary duties, and were in no way disturbed thereby. In the midst of an incalculable political event, under the pressure of a possible revolution, a police agent, not allowing himself to be affected by the insurrection and the barricade, would " nose " a thief.

Something very like this occurred on the afternoon of June 6, on the right bank of the Seine, a little beyond the Pont des Invalides.

There is no bank there now. The appearance of the spot has been altered.

On that slope, two men, a certain distance apart, seemed to be watching each other, each avoiding the other. The one in front was trying to get away, while the one behind wanted to overtake him.

It was like a game of chess played at a distance and in silence. Neither of them seemed to be in a hurry, and both walked slowly, as if each of them feared by increased speed to make his partner redouble his pace.

It might have been called an appetite following a prey, without appearing to do so purposely. The prey was crafty, and on its guard.

The proper relations between the hunted weasel and the hunting mastiff were observed. The one trying to escape was narrow chested and mean-looking; the one trying to catch him, was a tall fellow, rude of aspect, and evidently a rough customer.

The first, feeling himself the weaker, avoided the second, but did so with deep fury; any one who observed him would have seen in his eyes the gloomy hostility of flight, and all the threat which lies in fear.

The shore was deserted; there were no passers-by,— not even a boatman or lighter-man in the barges moored here and there.

It was not easy to see the two men, except from the opposite quay; and any one who had watched them at that distance would have seen that the man in front appeared a bristling, ragged, shambling fellow, anxious and shivering under a torn blouse, while the other was a classic and official personage, wearing the frock-coat of authority buttoned up to the chin.

The reader would probably recognize those two men, were he to see them more closely.

What was the object of the last one?

Probably he wished to clothe the other man more warmly.

When a man dressed by the State pursues a man in rags, it is in order to make of him, also, a man dressed by the State. The difference of colour is the sole question,— to be dressed in blue is glorious; to be dressed in red is disagreeable.

There is a purple of the lower classes.

It was probably some unpleasantness and some purple robe of this sort which the first man desired to shirk.

If the other allowed him to go on ahead, and did not yet arrest him, it was, to all appearance, in the hope of seeing him lead up to some significant rendezvous and some group worth capturing. This delicate operation is called "nosing."

What renders this conjecture highly probable is the fact that the buttoned-up man, perceiving from the shore an empty cab passing along the quay, made a sign to the driver; the driver understood, evidently recognized with whom he had to deal, turned about, and began to follow the two men at a foot-pace along the quay. This was not noticed by the ragged, shambling fellow in front.

The hackney-coach rolled along under the trees of the Champs Elysées. The shoulders of the driver, whip in hand, could be seen above the parapet.

One of the secret instructions of the police to their agents is: "Always have a hackney-coach at hand, in case of need."

While these men manœuvred with irreproachable strategy, each on his own side, they approached an incline in the quay, which allowed cab-drivers coming from Passy, to water their horses in the river. This incline has since been suppressed for the sake of symmetry,— horses die of thirst, but the eye is pleased.

It is probable that the man in the blouse meant to ascend by this incline, in order to try and escape into the Champs Elysées,— a place adorned with trees, but, to make up for

that, much frequented by police agents, where the other could easily procure assistance.

This point of the quay is not far distant from the house brought from Moret to Paris, in 1824, by Colonel Brack, and known as "the house of Francis I." A guard-house is close by.

To the great surprise of his watcher, the tracked man did not turn up the road to the watering-place. He continued to advance along the bank parallel with the quay.

His position was clearly becoming critical.

Unless he threw himself into the Seine, what could he do?

There were now no means left him of returning to the quay,— no incline or steps; and they were close to the spot marked by the bend in the Seine, near the Pont de Jena, where the bank, gradually narrowing, ended in a slender strip and was lost in the water. There he must inevitably find himself blockaded between the perpendicular wall on his right, the river on his left and facing him, and the authorities at his heels.

It is true that this termination of the bank was hidden from sight by a pile of rubbish, six or seven feet high,— the result of some demolition or other. But did this man hope to conceal himself effectually behind that heap of rubbish, which one need but walk around? The expedient would have been childish. He evidently did not dream of it. The innocence of robbers does not reach so far.

The pile of rubbish formed a sort of eminence on the water-side, extending in a promontory to the quay wall.

The pursued man reached this small mound and went round it, so that he was no longer seen by the other.

The latter, not seeing, was not seen; he took advantage of this to give up all dissimulation and walk very fast. In a few minutes, he reached the rubbish heap and passed round it. There he stood stupefied.

The man he was pursuing was not there.

Total eclipse of the man in the blouse.

The bank did not run more than thirty yards beyond the

rubbish heap, and then plunged under the water, which washed the quay wall. The fugitive could not have thrown himself into the Seine or have climbed up the quay without being seen by his pursuer. What had become of him?

The man in the buttoned-up coat walked to the end of the bank and stood there for a moment, lost in thought, with clenched fists and scowling eye. All at once he smote his forehead. He had just perceived, at the point where the ground ended and the water began, a broad, low, arched, iron grating, provided with a heavy lock and three massive hinges. This grating,—a sort of grate pierced at the bottom of the quay,— opened on the river as well as on the bank. A black stream poured from under it into the Seine.

Beyond the heavy rusty bars a sort of arched and dark passage could be seen. The man folded his arms and looked at the grating reproachfully.

This look not being sufficient, he tried to push open the grating; he shook it, but it offered a sturdy resistance. It was probable that it had just been opened, although no sound had been heard,— a singular thing with so rusty a gate; but it was certain that it had been closed again. This indicated that the man who had opened the gate, had not a pick-lock but a key!"

This evidence at once burst on the mind of the man who was trying to open the grating, and drew from him this indignant apostrophe:—

"Come, now! that's going it rather strong. A government key!"

Then, calming himself immediately, he expressed a whole world of inward ideas by this outburst of monosyllables, marked by an almost ironical accent:—

"So! so! so! so!"

This said, hoping we know not what,— either to see the man come out or others enter,— he posted himself on the watch behind the heap of rubbish, with the patient rage of a pointer.

In its turn the hackney-coach, which regulated all its movements by his, stopped just above him near the parapet. The driver, foreseeing a long halt, encased his horses' muzzles in the nose-bag full of oats, damp at the bottom and so well known to Parisians, to whom the government, be it said, in parenthesis, sometimes applies it. The few passers over the Pont de Jena, before going on, turned their heads to look for a moment at those two motionless details in the landscape,— the man on the bank and the hackney-coach on the quay.

CHAPTER IV

HE TOO BEARS HIS CROSS

JEAN VALJEAN had resumed his march, and had not again paused.

This march grew more and more laborious. The level of these passages varies; the average height is about five feet six inches, and was calculated for the stature of a man. Jean Valjean was compelled to stoop in order to avoid dashing Marius against the roof; he was forced at each moment to bend, then to draw himself up, and to feel the wall incessantly. The dampness of the stones and the sliminess of the flooring rendered them bad supports, either for hand or foot. He stumbled in the hideous dungheap of the city. The intermittent flashes from the street-gratings appeared only at long intervals, and were so faint that the bright sunshine seemed like moonlight; all else was fog, miasma, opaqueness, blackness. Jean Valjean was hungry and thirsty,— especially thirsty; and it was like the sea,— there was water, water everywhere, but not a drop to drink. His strength, which, as we know, was prodigious, and but slightly diminished by age, owing to his chaste and sober life, was however beginning to give way. Fatigue assailed him; and

his decreasing strength increased the weight of his burden. Marius, who perhaps was dead, was heavy, like all inert bodies. Jean Valjean held him so that his own chest was not oppressed, and he could breathe as freely as possible. He felt the rapid gliding of rats between his legs. One was so frightened that it bit him. From time to time a gush of fresh air blew through the gratings, and revived him.

It might have been about three o'clock in the afternoon when he reached the belt sewer.

He was at first amazed by this sudden widening. He unexpectedly found himself in a gallery whose two walls his outstretched arms could not reach, and under an arch which his head did not touch. The Great Sewer is, in fact, eight feet in width by seven high. At the point where the Montmartre drain joins the Great Sewer, two other subterranean galleries,— that of the Rue de Provence and that of the Slaughter-House,— form cross-roads. Between these four ways a less sagacious man would have been puzzled. Jean Valjean selected the widest,— that is to say, the belt sewer. But here the question again came up: Should he ascend or descend? He thought that the situation was pressing, and that he must now reach the Seine at any risk,— in other words he must descend. He turned to the left.

It was fortunate that he did so, for it would be an error to suppose that the belt sewer has two outlets,— one toward Bercy, the other toward Passy,— and that it is, as its name indicates, the subterranean belt of Paris on the right bank. The Great Sewer, which is nought else, it must be borne in mind, than the old Menilmontant brook, leads, if you ascend it, to a blind alley; that is to say, to its original starting-point,— its source at the foot of the Menilmontant mound. It has no direct communication with the branch which collects the waters of Paris after leaving the Popincourt quarter, and which falls into the Seine by the Amelot sewer above the old Isle Louviers. This branch, which completes the collecting sewer, is separated from it under the Rue Menil-

montant itself, by masonry-work which marks the point where the waters from up stream and down stream divide. If Jean Valjean had remounted the gallery he would have reached, after countless efforts, exhausted by fatigue and in a dying condition, a wall. He would have been lost.

Strictly speaking, by going back a little way, entering the passage of the Filles du Calvaire, on condition that he did not hesitate at the subterranean maze of the Boucherat cross-roads, by taking the St. Louis passage, then, to the left, the St. Gilles gut, then by turning to the right and avoiding the St. Sebastian gallery, he might have reached the Amelot sewer; and thence, if he did not lose his way in the sort of *F* which underlies the Bastille, he might have reached the outlet on the Seine near the Arsenal. But to do this, he must have been thoroughly acquainted with the enormous madrepore of the sewer in all its ramifications and openings. Now, we must dwell on the fact, he knew nothing of this frightful labyrinth through which he was moving; and, had he been asked where he was, he would have replied: "In night."

His instinct served him well. To descend, was, in fact, the only salvation possible.

He left on his right the two passages which ramify in the shape of a claw under the Rue Laffitte and the Rue St. Georges, and the long bifurcated corridor of the Chaussée d'Antin.

A little beyond an affluent (which was, most likely, the Madeleine branch) he paused. He was very weary. A tolerably large grating,— probably the opening in the Rue d'Anjou,— afforded an almost bright light. Jean Valjean, with the gentleness of movement which a brother would bestow on a wounded brother, laid Marius on the foot-path of the drain. His blood-stained face gleamed under the white light of the trap as at the bottom of a tomb. His eyes were closed, his hair was plastered to his temples like a painter's brushes dried in red-wash, his hands were limp and dead, his limbs cold, blood was clotted at the corners of his lips.

Coagulated blood had collected in his cravat-knot; his shirt stuck in his wounds, the cloth of his coat chafed the gaping edges of the living flesh. Jean Valjean, removing the clothes with the tips of his fingers, laid his hand on the breast,— the heart still beat. Jean Valjean tore up his shirt, bandaged the wounds as well as he could, and stopped the blood that flowed; then, stooping over Marius, in this half daylight, as he still lay unconscious, and almost breathless, he gazed at him with indescribable hatred.

In disarranging Marius's clothes, he had found in his pockets, two things,— the loaf, which he had forgotten on the previous evening, and his pocket-book. Valjean ate the bread and opened the pocket-book. On the first page he found the lines written by Marius. The reader will remember them:—

"My name is Marius Pontmercy. Carry my body to my grandfather, M. Gillenormand, No. 6 Rue des Filles du Calvaire, in the Marais."

Jean Valjean read these lines by the light from the grating, and remained for a time absorbed, as it were, in himself, repeating in a low voice, "Rue des Filles du Calvaire,— No. 6,— M. Gillenormand." He returned the pocket-book to Marius's pocket. He had eaten, and his strength had returned to him; he again raised Marius, carefully laid his head on his own right shoulder, and continued his descent of the sewer.

The Great Sewer, running along the channel of the valley of Menilmontant, is nearly two leagues in length. It is paved for a considerable portion of the distance.

This torch, formed of the names of the streets of Paris, with which we enlighten for the reader Jean Valjean's subterranean march, Jean Valjean himself did not possess. There was nothing to tell him what zone of the city he was traversing, nor what distance he had gone. Only the growing pallor of the flakes of light, which he met from time to time, indicated to him that the sun was leaving the pave-

ments, and that day would soon be over; and the roll of vehicles over his head, which became intermittent instead of continuous, and then almost ceased, proved to him that he was no longer under central Paris, and that he was approaching some solitary region near the outer boulevards, or the most distant quays. Where there are fewer houses and streets, the drain has fewer openings. The darkness thickened around Jean Valjean. Still, he continued to advance, groping his way in the shadow.

This shadow suddenly became terrible.

CHAPTER V

SAND, LIKE WOMAN, MAY BE SO FINE AS TO BE PERFIDIOUS

HE felt that he was entering water, and that he had no longer stone, but mud, beneath his feet.

It sometimes happens, on certain coasts of Brittany or Scotland, that a man, whether traveller or fisherman, walking, at low tide, on the sands some distance from the shore, suddenly perceives that for several minutes past he has found some difficulty in walking. The beach beneath his feet is like pitch; his soles stick to it; it is no longer sand, it is bird-lime. The beach is perfectly dry, but at every step that he takes, so soon as his foot is raised, the imprint that it leaves is filled with water. The eye, however, has perceived no change; the immense expanse is smooth and calm, all the sand looks alike; there is nothing to distinguish the soil which is solid from that which is no longer so. The merry little swarm of sand-fleas continues to leap tumultuously about the feet of the wayfarer. The man goes his way, turns toward the land, and tries to approach the shore. Not that he is alarmed. Alarmed at what? Still, he feels as if the heaviness of his feet increased at every step he takes.

All at once, he sinks in. He sinks in two or three inches. Decidedly, he is not on the right road; he stops to get his bearings. Suddenly he looks at his feet. His feet have disappeared. The sand covers them. He draws his feet out of the sand, he tries to retrace his steps, he turns back, but he sinks in deeper still. The sand comes up to his ankle; he tears himself loose and flings himself to the left,— the sand comes to his knee; he turns to the right,— the sand comes up to his thigh. Then he recognizes, with indescribable terror, that he is caught in a quicksand, and that he has beneath him that frightful medium in which a man can no more walk than a fish can swim. He throws away his load, if he have one,— he lightens himself like a ship in distress; it is too late: the sand is already above his knees.

He calls out, he waves his hat or his handkerchief; but the sand gains on him more and more. If the shore is deserted, if land is too distant, if the quicksand is too ill-famed, if there is no hero at hand, it is all over with him,— he is doomed to be swallowed up. He is condemned to that terrible burial, long, awful, implacable, impossible to delay or to hasten, which lasts for hours; which never ends; which seizes you when erect, free, and in perfect health; which drags you down by the feet; which, at every effort you attempt, every cry you utter, drags you a little deeper; which seems to punish you for your resistance by a redoubled clutch; which forces a man to return slowly to the earth, while allowing him ample time to survey the houses, the trees, the green fields, the smoke from the villages on the plain, the sails of the vessels on the sea, the birds that fly and sing, the sun, and the sky. A quicksand is a tomb that becomes a tide, and rises from the depths of the earth toward a living man. Each minute is an inexorable gravedigger. The poor wretch tries to sit, to lie down, to climb, to crawl; every movement that he makes, buries him deeper; he draws himself up, and only sinks the more; he feels himself swallowed up; he yells, implores, cries to the clouds, wrings his hands, grows desperate. He is in the sand up to

his waist; the sand reaches to his breast,— he is but a bust. He lifts his hands, utters furious groans, digs his nails into the sand, tries to cling to that dust, raises himself on his elbows to tear himself from that soft sheath, and sobs frantically: the sand mounts higher. It reaches his shoulders, it reaches his neck; his face alone is visible. The mouth cries out; the sand fills it: silence. The eyes still look forth; the sand closes them: night. Then the forehead sinks; a little hair waves above the sand; a hand emerges, pierces through the sand, quivers, and disappears. Sinister effacement of a man.

Sometimes a rider is swallowed up with his horse; sometimes the carter is swallowed up with his cart. Everything founders beneath that strand. It is shipwreck elsewhere than in the water. It is the earth drowning a man. The earth, permeated by the ocean, becomes a snare. It presents itself as a plain, and opens like a wave. The abyss is subject to these acts of treachery.

This mournful fate, always possible on certain seashores, was also possible, some thirty years ago, in the sewers of Paris.

Before the important works, undertaken in 1833, the subway of Paris was subject to sudden breakings-in.

The water filtered through certain subjacent and peculiarly friable strata; the roadway, whether of paving-stones, as in the ancient drains, or of cement on concrete, as in the new galleries, having no support, gave way. A sinking in a road of this nature means a crack, and a crack means a crumbling away. The road-way broke away for a certain distance. Such a gap, a gulf of mud, was called, in the special langauge of the sewer-men, "a break." What is "a break"? It is the quicksand of the seashore suddenly met with under ground; it is the beach of Mount St. Michael in a sewer. The moistened soil is in a state of fusion, as it were; all its particles are held suspended in a shifting medium. It is not solid earth and it is not water. The depth is at times very great. Nothing can be more terrible than such an en-

counter. If water predominate, death is quick,— the man is swallowed up; if earth predominate, death is slow,— he is sucked in.

Can our readers imagine such a death? If it be frightful to sink in a quicksand on the seashore, what is it in a cesspool? Instead of fresh air, broad daylight, that clear horizon, those vast sounds, those free clouds from which life rains, those barks seen in the distance, that hope under every form, of possible passers-by, of help possible up to the last minute,— instead of all this, deafness, blindness, a black archway; the interior of a ready made tomb; death in the mud beneath a tombstone; slow suffocation by filth; a sarcophagus where asphyxia opens its claws in the mire and clutches you by the throat; fetidness mingled with the death-rattle; slime instead of sand; sulphureted hydrogen in lieu of the hurricane; a dunghill in place of the ocean; and to call, to gnash your teeth, to writhe and struggle and expire, with that enormous city which knows nothing of it all, above your head.

Inexpressible is the horror of dying thus! Death sometimes expiates its atrocity by a certain terrible dignity. On the funeral pyre, in shipwreck, a man may be great; in the flames, as in the foam, a superb attitude is possible: a man may be transfigured in perishing. But not so here. This death is unclean. It is humiliating to expire. The last vague visions are abject. Mud is synonymous with shame. It is petty, ugly, infamous. To die in a butt of Malmsey, like Clarence,— so be it; in the ditch of the scavenger, like D'Escoubleau, is horrible. To struggle therein is hideous; at the same time that one dies, he wallows in the mud. There is enough darkness for hell, and enough mire for a mere slough, and the dying man does not know whether he is about to become a spectre or a frog.

Everywhere else, the sepulchre is sinister; here, it is deformed.

The depth of the breaks varied, as well as their length and density, according to the nature of the subsoil. Some-

times a break was three or four feet deep, sometimes eight or ten; sometimes it was bottomless. In one, the mud was almost solid; in another, almost liquid. In the Lunière break, it would have taken a man a day to disappear, while he would have been devoured in five minutes by the Phélippeaux slough. The mud bears more or less well according to its degree of density. A child may escape where a man must perish. The first law of safety is to throw away every sort of load. Every sewer-man who felt the ground give way beneath him, began by throwing away his bag of tools, his basket, or his hod.

The breaks were due to various causes,— the friability of the soil, some convulsion of the earth at a depth beyond the reach of man, violent summer storms, long continued winter rains, and steady drizzling showers. Sometimes the weight of the surrounding houses upon a marshy or sandy soil broke the roofs of the subterranean galleries and warped them; or else it chanced that the road-way burst and split asunder under this terrific pressure. The pile of the Pantheon destroyed in this way, about a century ago, a portion of the vaults under Mount St. Geneviève. When a sewer gave way under the weight of the houses, the mischief was sometimes revealed in the street above by a sort of saw-toothed space between the paving-stones. This fissure was continued in a serpentine line along the whole length of the cracked drain; and in such a case, the evil being visible, the remedy could be promptly applied. It often happened also that the inward ravages were not revealed by any scar outside. And, in that case, woe to the sewer-men! Entering the injured drain incautiously, they might be lost in it. The old registers mention several sewer-men buried in this manner in a break. They give various names; among others, that of the sewer-man swallowed up in a slough under the man-hole in the Rue Carême-Prenant,— one Blaise Poutrain. This Blaise was a brother of Nicholas Poutrain, who was the last grave-digger of the cemetery called the Charnier des Innocents,[1] in 1785, when that cemetery expired.

[1] Charnel House of the Innocents.

There was also that young and charming Viscount d'Escoubleau, to whom we just alluded,— one of the heroes of the Siege of Lerida, where the assault was made in silk stockings, with violins at the head of the column. D'Escoubleau, surprised one night with his cousin, the Duchess de Sourdis, was drowned in a quagmire of the Beautreillis sewer, where he had taken refuge to escape the duke. Madame de Sourdis, when informed of his death, asked for her smelling-bottle, and forgot to weep, in smelling her salts. In such cases, no love can hold out; the cesspool extinguishes it. Hero refuses to wash the corpse of Leander. Thisbe stops her nose in the presence of Pyramus, and says: "Phew!"

CHAPTER VI

THE BREAK

JEAN VALJEAN found himself in the presence of a break.

This sort of quagmire was frequent at that day in the subsoil of the Champs Elysées, where it was difficult to carry on hydraulic works, and which was most injurious to underground drains, owing to its extreme fluidity. This fluidity exceeds even the inconsistency of the sands of the Quartier St. Georges, which could only be overcome by laying rubble on concrete, and of the gas-infected clay strata in the Quartier des Martyrs, which are so liquid that a passage could only be effected under the Galerie des Martyrs by means of a cast-iron pipe. When, in 1836, the authorities demolished and rebuilt the old stone sewer under the Faubourg St. Honoré, in which Jean Valjean was now engaged, the shifting sand which forms the subsoil of the Champs Elysées as far as the Seine, presented such an obstacle that the operation lasted nearly six months, to the great annoyance of those

living on the water-side,— especially such as owned mansions and coaches. The work was more than difficult,— it was dangerous. It is true that it rained for four and a half months, and the Seine overflowed three times.

The break which Jean Valjean came across was occasioned by the shower of the previous evening. The pavement, which was badly sustained by the subjacent sand, had given way, and produced a deposit of rainwater. Infiltration having taken place, the ground yielded. The road-bed, being displaced, sank into the mud. How far? Impossible to say. The darkness was denser there than anywhere else. It was a slough of mud in a cavern of night.

Jean Valjean felt the pavement vanish under his feet. He entered the slough. There was water on top and mud underneath. He must pass it. It was impossible to turn back. Marius was dying, and Jean Valjean worn out. Where else could he go? Jean Valjean advanced. The slough appeared shallow for the first few steps. But as he advanced, his feet sank deeper. Soon he had slime up to his calves, and water above his knees. He walked on, raising Marius in both arms as high above the water as he could. The slime now came up to his knees and the water to his waist. He could no longer retreat. He sank deeper and deeper. This mud, firm enough to bear the weight of one man, could not, clearly, bear two. Marius and Jean Valjean might have had a chance of getting out separately. Jean Valjean continued to advance, carrying the dying man, who was, perhaps, a corpse.

The water came up to his armpits; he felt himself drowning; he could scarcely move in the depth of mud in which he was standing. The density which was his support, was also an obstacle. He still held Marius up, and advanced with an extraordinary expenditure of strength; but he was sinking. He had only his head out of water now, and his two arms sustaining Marius. In old paintings of the Deluge there is a mother holding her child in the same way.

He still sank; he threw back his face to escape the water

and to breathe. Any one who saw him in that darkness might have fancied that he saw a mask floating on the gloomy waters. He vaguely perceived above him Marius's hanging head and livid face; he made a desperate effort, and thrust his foot forward; it struck something solid,— a point of support. It was high time.

He drew himself up, and writhed and rooted himself with a sort of fury upon that support. It produced on him the effect of the first step of a staircase leading back to life.

This support, met with in the mud, at the supreme moment, was the beginning of the other side of the roadway, which had bent without breaking, and curved under the weight of water like a plank, in a single piece. A well-constructed pavement forms a curve and possesses this firmness. This fragment of road-way, partly submerged, but solid, was a veritable rail of safety; once upon it, they were saved. Jean Valjean ascended it, and gained the other side of the slough.

As he left the water his foot struck against a stone, and he fell on his knees. He considered that this was only right, and remained on them for some time, his soul absorbed in words addressed to God.

He rose, shivering, chilled, foul smelling, bent beneath the dying man, whom he dragged after him, dripping with filth, his soul full of strange brightness.

CHAPTER VII

WRECKED IN SIGHT OF PORT

HE set out once again.

However, if he had not left his life in the break, he seemed to have left his strength there. That supreme effort had exhausted him. His fatigue was now so great that he was obliged, every three or four paces, to pause for breath,

and to lean against the wall. Once, he had to sit down on the foot-path in order to alter Marius's position, and he thought that he should have to remain there. But if his vigour were dead, his energy was not. He rose again.

He walked on desperately, almost quickly, went thus for a hundred yards, without raising his head, almost without breathing, and, all at once, ran against the wall. He had reached a turn in the drain, and reaching it with head down, struck against the wall. He raised his eyes, and at the end of the passage, far, very far away, he saw a light. This time it was no terrible light: it was fair white light,— it was daylight.

Jean Valjean saw the outlet.

A condemned soul that suddenly saw, from the middle of the furnace, the outlet from Gehenna, might feel as Jean Valjean felt. It would fly wildly with the stumps of its burned wings toward that radiant portal. Jean Valjean no longer felt fatigue, he no longer felt Marius's weight, his muscles were of steel once more; he ran rather than walked. As he drew nearer, the outlet became more and more distinct. It was a pointed arch, not so high as the roof, which gradually sank, and not so wide as the gallery, which grew narrower at the same time that the roof became lower. The tunnel ended like the inside of a funnel,— a faulty construction, imitated from the wickets of houses of correction, logical in a prison, but illogical in a drain, and which has since been corrected.

Jean Valjean reached the outlet.

There, he stopped.

It was certainly the outlet, but he could not get out.

The arch was closed by a strong grating; and this grating, which apparently rarely swung on its rusty hinges, was fastened to the stone wall by a heavy lock, which, red with rust, looked like an enormous brick. The keyhole was visible, as well as the bolt, deeply sunk in its iron staple. It was one of those Bastille locks of which ancient Paris was so prodigal.

Beyond the grating were the open air, the river, daylight,

the bank, very narrow, but sufficient for escape. The distant quays, Paris,— that gulf in which a man hides so easily, — the wide horizon, liberty. On the right could be distinguished, down the river, the Pont de Jena; and on the left, upstream, the Pont des Invalides. The spot would have been a favourable one in which to await night, and to escape.

It was one of the most solitary points in Paris,— the bank facing the Gros-Caillou. The flies went in and out through the grating-bars.

It might have been about half-past eight in the evening. Day was dying.

Jean Valjean laid Marius along the wall on the dry part of the way, then he approached the grating, and clenched the bars with both hands; he gave a frantic shake, but it produced absolutely no effect. The grating did not stir. Jean Valjean seized the bars one after the other, hoping he might be able to break away the least substantial one, and employ it as a lever to lift the gate off its hinges or break the lock.

Not a bar stirred. A tiger's teeth are not more solidly set in their sockets. Without a lever it was impossible to pry open the grating. The obstacle was invincible. There was no way of bursting the gate.

Must he, then, stop there? What was he to do? What was to become of him? He had not the strength to turn back, to recommence the frightful journey which he had already taken. Moreover, how was he to again cross that slough from which he had only escaped as by a miracle? And after the slough, was there not that police squad, which assuredly was not to be escaped twice? And then, where should he go? What direction should he take? To follow the slope would not lead to his goal. If he reached another outlet he would find it obstructed by an iron plate or a grating. All the issues were undoubtedly closed in that way. Accident had left the grating by which they entered, open; but it was plain that all the other mouths of the sewer were closed. He had only succeeded in escaping into a prison.

All was over. All that Jean Valjean had done was useless. Exhaustion had led to failure.

They were both caught in the immense dark web of death, and Jean Valjean felt the fearful spider already running along the black threads quivering in the darkness.

He turned his back on the grating, and fell on the pavement,— struck down rather than seated,— near Marius, who was still motionless, and his head sank upon his knees. There was no outlet. That was the last drop of agony.

Of whom did he think in this profound despondency? Neither of himself nor of Marius. He thought of Cosette.

CHAPTER VIII

THE TORN COAT-TAIL

IN the midst of this utter exhaustion a hand was laid on his shoulder, and a low voice said:—

"Half shares."

Some one in that shadow? As nothing so resembles a dream as despair, Jean Valjean fancied that he was dreaming. He had not heard a footstep. Was it possible? He raised his eyes.

A man stood before him.

This man was dressed in a blouse; his feet were naked; he held his shoes in his left hand. He had evidently taken them off in order to reach Jean Valjean without letting his footsteps be heard.

Jean Valjean did not hesitate for a moment. However unexpected the meeting might be, the man was known to him. It was Thénardier.

Although aroused, so to speak, with a start, Jean Valjean, accustomed to alarms and inured to unexpected blows, which must be parried promptly, at once regained possession of

all his presence of mind. Besides, the situation could not be worse. A certain degree of distress ceases to be capable of any crescendo, and Thénardier himself could add no blackness to this night.

There was a moment's pause.

Thénardier, raising his right hand to the level of his forehead, made a screen of it. Then he drew his eyebrows together with a frown, which, with a slight contraction of the lips, characterizes the sagacious attention of a man who is striving to recognize another. He did not succeed. Jean Valjean, as we said, had his back to the light, and was besides so disfigured, so filthy, and so blood-stained, that he would not have been recognized in broad daylight. On the other hand, Thénardier, his face lit up by the light from the grating,— a cellar-like light, it is true, livid, but exact in its lividness,— was as "plain as the nose on your face," to use a vigorous popular metaphor. This inequality of conditions sufficed to insure some advantage to Jean Valjean in the mysterious duel which was about to begin between the two situations and the two men. The encounter took place between Jean Valjean veiled and Thénardier unmasked.

Jean Valjean at once perceived that Thénardier did not recognize him.

They studied each other silently in that gloom, as if taking each other's measure. Thénardier was the first to break the silence.

"How do you mean to get out?"

Jean Valjean made no reply. Thénardier continued:

"It is impossible to pick the lock. And yet you must get out of this."

"That is true," said Jean Valjean.

"Well, then, half shares."

"What do you mean?"

"You have killed the man; very good. I have the key."

Thénardier pointed to Marius. He resumed: "I don't know you, but I'm willing to help you. You must be a friend."

Jean Valjean began to understand. Thénardier took him for an assassin. The latter went on:—

"Listen, mate. You didn't kill that man without looking to see what he had in his pockets. Give me my half. I will open the gate." And half drawing a huge key from under his ragged blouse, he added: "Would you like to see how the 'key to liberty' looks? See here."

Jean Valjean was so astounded that he doubted whether what he saw was real. It was Providence appearing in a horrible form, and his good angel rising from the ground in the shape of Thénardier.

The latter thrust his hand into a big pocket hidden under his blouse, drew out a rope, and handed it to Jean Valjean.

"There," he said, "I'll give you the rope into the bargain."

"What am I to do with the rope?"

"You also want a stone, but you will find that outside. There is a heap of rubbish there."

"What am I to do with a stone?"

"Why, you ass, as you are going to throw the flat into the river, you want a rope and a stone, or else the body will float on the water."

Jean Valjean took the rope. There is no one who has not sometimes accepted a thing in this mechanical way.

Thénardier snapped his fingers as if a sudden idea had occurred to him:—

"Hullo, mate, how did you manage to get through that slough? I did not dare to venture into it. Phew! you don't smell good."

After a pause, he added:—

"I ask you questions, but you are quite right not to answer. It is an apprenticeship for that ugly quarter of an hour before the beak. And then, by not talking at all, a man runs no risk of talking too loud. No matter, though I cannot see your face and do not know your name, you are wrong to suppose that I do not know who you are and what you want. I twig. You have smashed that swell a bit; and

now you want to tuck him away somewhere. You'd better try the river, that great nonsense-hider. I will help you out of your hobble. It is my delight to aid a good fellow out of a scrape."

While commending Jean Valjean for his silence, it was plain that he was trying to make him speak. He nudged his shoulder, in an attempt to get a look at his profile, and he exclaimed, though without raising the pitch of his voice:—

"Talking of the slough,— you are a smart one! Why didn't you throw the man into it?"

Jean Valjean preserved silence.

Thénardier continued, raising his rag of a cravat to his Adam's apple, a gesture which completes the capable air of a serious man:—

"Really, perhaps you were wise. The workmen coming in to-morrow to stop up the hole would certainly have found the swell, and they might have picked up the scent, thread by thread, bit by bit, and nabbed you. Some one has passed through the sewer. Who? How did he get out? Was he seen? The police are full of sense. The drain is a traitor, and denounces you. Such a find is a rarity; it attracts attention, for few people employ the sewer for their little business, while the river belongs to everybody. The river is the true grave. At the end of a month your man is fished up in the nets at St. Cloud. Well, who cares for that? It's carrion,— that's all. Who killed that man? Paris. And justice makes no inquiries. You were wise."

The more loquacious Thénardier became, the more silent was Jean Valjean. Thénardier shook him by the shoulder again.

"Now, let's settle this business. Shares. You have seen my key, show me your money."

Thénardier was haggard, fierce, suspicious, slightly menacing, but friendly. There was one strange fact: Thénardier's manner was not simple; he did not seem entirely at his ease; while not affecting any air of mystery, he spoke in a low voice; every now and then he laid his finger on his lip,

and muttered, "Hush!" It was difficult to guess why. There was no one present but themselves. Jean Valjean thought that other ruffians were possibly hidden in some corner, no great distance off, and that Thénardier was not anxious to share with them. The latter continued:—

"Now for a finish. How much had the cove about him?"

Jean Valjean felt in his pockets.

It was his habit, as will be remembered, always to have money about him. The gloomy life of expedients to which he was condemned rendered this a necessity. This time, however, he was unprovided. In putting on his National Guard uniform upon the previous evening he forgot, painfully absorbed as he was, to take his pocket-book. He had only some small change in his waistcoat-pocket. He turned out his pocket, which was saturated with slime, and laid on the footpath a louis d'or, two five-franc pieces, and five or six double sous.

Thénardier thrust out his lower lip with a significant twist of the neck.

"You killed him cheap," he said.

He began to feel in the pockets of Jean Valjean and Marius with the utmost familiarity. Jean Valjean, who was chiefly anxious to keep his back to the light, allowed him to do so.

While handling Marius's coat, Thénardier, with the dexterity of a conjuror, managed to tear off a strip, without Jean Valjean perceiving the fact; this he concealed under his blouse, probably thinking that the bit of cloth might serve hereafter to identify the assassinated man and the assassin. However, he found no more than the thirty francs.

"It is true," said he; "both of you together have no more than that." And, forgetting his motto: "half shares," he took all.

He hesitated a little over the double sous, but on reflection, he took them too, muttering: "I don't care! You stick people too cheaply."

This done, he again drew the key from under his blouse.

"Now, my friend, you must be off. It is like a fair here; you pay when you go out. You have paid, now go." And he began to laugh.

We may be permitted to doubt whether he had a pure and disinterested desire to save an assassin, when he lent a stranger the aid of his key, and allowed any other than himself to pass through that gate.

Thénardier helped Jean Valjean to replace Marius on his back, then he proceeded to the grating on the tips of his bare toes, making Jean Valjean a sign to follow him. He looked outside, placed his finger on his lip, and remained for some seconds as if in suspense; his inspection over, he put the key in the lock. The bolt slid back, and the gate turned on its hinges without grating or creaking. It moved very softly.

It was plain that this grating and those hinges, carefully oiled, were opened more frequently than might be supposed. This ease was ominous; it spoke of furtive comings and goings, of silent entrances and exits of men by night, and of the crafty footfall of crime.

The sewer was evidently an accomplice of some mysterious band. This taciturn grating was a receiver of stolen goods.

Thénardier held the door ajar, left just room for Jean Valjean to pass, reclosed the gate, gave the key a double turn in the lock, and plunged back into the darkness, making no more noise than a breath. He seemed to walk with the velvety pads of a tiger.

A moment later that hideous providence has disappeared. Jean Valjean found himself outside.

CHAPTER IX

MARIUS APPEARS DEAD TO AN EXPERT

HE let Marius slip down upon the bank.

They were outside; miasmas, darkness, horror, lay behind him. The healthy, pure, living, joyous, freely respirable air inundated him. All around him was silence, but it was the charming silence of the sun setting in unclouded azure. Twilight had come; night, the great liberator, the friend of all those who need a mantle of darkness to escape from an agony, was at hand. The sky presented itself on all sides like an enormous calm. The river rippled up to his feet with the sound of a kiss. The aerial dialogue of the nests bidding each other good-night in the elms of the Champs Elysées was audible. A few stars, faintly studding the pale blue of the zenith, and visible to revery alone, formed imperceptible little splendours in the immensity. The evening unfolded all the sweetness of infinitude over Jean Valjean's head.

It was the exquisite and undecided hour which says neither yes nor no. Night was already sufficiently advanced for a man to disappear in it a short distance off, and yet there was sufficient daylight to allow of recognition close by.

For a few seconds Jean Valjean was irresistibly overcome by all this august and caressing serenity; there are such minutes of oblivion: suffering ceases to harass the unhappy wretch; all is eclipsed in thought; peace covers the dreamer like night; and, under the gleaming twilight the soul shines starry, in imitation of the sky which is lighting its lamps. Jean Valjean could not refrain from contemplating that vast clear shade which hung above him; meditatively he took a bath of ecstasy and prayer in the majestic silence of the eternal heavens. Then, as if a sense of duty had returned to him he eagerly bent over Marius, and lifting some water

in the hollow of his hand, softly threw a few drops into his face. Marius's eyelids did not open, but he still breathed through his parted lips.

Jean Valjean was again about to plunge his hand into the river, when he suddenly felt that strange sensation which we feel when there is some one behind us whom we do not see. We have already alluded elsewhere to this sensation, with which we are all familiar.

He turned round. There was really some one behind him, and there had been just before.

A man of lofty stature, wrapped in a long coat, with folded arms, and holding in his right hand a cudgel, whose leaden knob was visible, was standing a few paces behind Jean Valjean, as he leaned over Marius.

It was, with the help of the darkness, a species of apparition. Any ordinary man would have been frightened because of the twilight, and a thoughtful man on account of the bludgeon.

Jean Valjean recognized Javert.

The reader has doubtless guessed that Thénardier's pursuer was no other than Javert. Javert, after his unhoped-for escape from the barricade, went to the prefecture of police, made a verbal report to the prefect, in person, in a short audience, and then immediately returned to duty, which implied — the note found on him will be remembered — a certain surveillance of the right bank of the river near the Champs Elysées, which had, for some time past, attracted the attention of the police.

There he saw Thénardier, and followed him. We know the rest.

It will also be understood that the grating, so obligingly opened for Jean Valjean, was a clever trick on the part of Thénardier. He felt that Javert was still there; the man who is watched has a scent which never deceives him. It was necessary to throw a bone to that bloodhound. An assassin — what a windfall! It was a legacy which must never be refused. Thénardier, by putting Jean Valjean out-

side in his stead, offered the police a prey, threw them off the scent, led them to forget him in a greater adventure, recompensed Javert for his loss of time (which always flatters a spy), gained thirty francs, and fully intended, for his own part, to escape by the help of this diversion.

Jean Valjean had passed from one shoal to another.

These two meetings, one after the other, falling from Thénardier upon Javert, were rather severe.

Javert did not recognize Jean Valjean, who, as we have said, no longer resembled himself. He did not unfold his arms, but took a firmer grasp of his "life-preserver," by an imperceptible movement, and said in a curt, calm voice:—

"Who are you?"

"I."

"Who is 'I'?"

"Jean Valjean."

Javert placed his life-preserver between his teeth, bent his knees, bowed his back, laid his two powerful hands on Jean Valjean's shoulders, which they held as in two vises, examined and recognized him. Their faces almost touched.

Javert's glance was terrific.

Jean Valjean remained inert under Javert's grip, like a lion submitting to the claws of a lynx.

"Inspector Javert," said he, "you have me in your power. Besides, I have considered myself your prisoner ever since this morning. I did not give you my address in order to try and escape you. Take me. But grant me one thing."

Javert did not seem to hear. He kept his eyes fixed on Jean Valjean. His wrinkled chin thrust up his lips toward his nose,— a sign of savage revery. At length he loosed his hold of Jean Valjean, drew himself up stiffly, clutched his life-preserver, and, as if in a dream, muttered rather than uttered this question:—

"What are you doing here? Who is that man?"

Jean Valjean replied, and the sound of his voice seemed to awaken Javert:—

"It is of him that I wished to speak. Do with me as

you please; but first help me to carry him home. That is all I ask of you."

Javert's face contracted as it always did when any one seemed to believe him capable of a concession. Still, he did not say no.

He stooped again, took from his pocket a handkerchief, which he dipped in the water, and wiped Marius's bloody brow.

"This man was at the barricade," he said in a low voice, and as if speaking to himself. "He is the one whom they called Marius."

He was a first-class spy, who observed everything, listened to everything, heard everything, and picked up everything, even when he believed himself about to die; who, even in his death agony, was a spy; and who, standing on the first step of the sepulchre, took notes.

He seized Marius's hand and felt for his pulse.

"He is wounded," said Jean Valjean.

"He is a dead man," said Javert.

Jean Valjean replied:—

"No. Not yet."

"Then you brought him here from the barricade?" observed Javert.

His preoccupation must have been great for him not to dwell on that alarming escape through the sewers, and for him not even to remark Jean Valjean's silence after his question.

Jean Valjean, on his side, seemed to have but a single thought. He continued:—

"He lives in the Marias, in the Rue des Filles du Calvaire, with his grandfather,— I have forgotten his name."

He fumbled in Marius's pocket, pulled out the pocket-book, opened it at the page on which Marius had written in pencil, and offered it to Javert.

There was still sufficient light hovering in the air to admit of reading. Javert, besides, had in his eye the feline phosphorescence of night-birds. He deciphered the few lines

written by Marius, and growled: "Gillenormand, No. 6, Rue des Filles du Calvaire."

Then he cried, "Driver!"

Our readers will remember the coachman waiting above in case of need.

Javert kept Marius's pocket-book.

A moment after, the hackney coach, which drove down the incline leading to the watering-place, was on the bank. Marius was deposited on the back seat, and Javert sat down by Jean Valjean's side on the front seat.

The door was closed, the cab started off rapidly along the quays, in the direction of the Bastille.

They quitted the quays and turned into the streets. The driver, a black outline on his box, lashed his lean horses. An icy silence reigned in the hackney coach. Marius, motionless, his body reclining in one corner, his head on his breast, his arms hanging, his legs stiff, appeared to be only waiting for a coffin. Jean Valjean seemed made of gloom, and Javert of stone; and in that carriage full of night, whose interior, every time that it passed a street-lantern, seemed to be lividly lit up, as if by an intermittent flash of lightning, accident had united and seemed to bring face to face the three forms of tragic immobility,— the corpse, the spectre, and the statue.

CHAPTER X

RETURN OF THE SON PRODIGAL OF HIS LIFE

AT every jolt over the pavement a drop of blood fell from Marius's hair.

It was after dark when the hackney coach reached No. 6, Rue des Filles du Calvaire.

Javert got out first, made sure, with one glance, of the

number over the gateway, and raising the heavy wrought-iron knocker, adorned in the old style with a goat and a satyr contending, gave a violent knock. The door opened slightly, and Javert gave it a push. The porter half-showed himself, yawning, and scarce awake, candle in hand.

Every one in the house was asleep. People go to bed early in the Marais, especially on days of rioting. This good old district, terrified by revolution, takes refuge in sleep, like children who, when they hear old Bogey coming, quickly hide their heads under the counterpane.

In the mean time, Jean Valjean and the driver removed Marius from the hackney coach,— Valjean holding him under the arm-pits, and the coachman under the knees.

As they carried Marius in this way, Jean Valjean slipped his hand under his clothes, which were terribly torn, felt his chest, and assured himself that his heart still beat. It even beat a little less feebly, as if the motion of the vehicle had produced a certain return of life.

Javert addressed the porter in the tone which becomes the government in the presence of the porter of a man who belongs to a party faction.

"Any one live here of the name of Gillenormand?"

"Yes. What do you want with him?"

"We have brought his son home."

"His son?" asked the porter in amazement.

"He is dead."

Jean Valjean, who followed, ragged and filthy, behind Javert, and whom the porter regarded with some horror, made him a sign that it was not so.

The porter seemed to understand neither Javert's remark nor Jean Valjean's motion. Javert continued:—

"He has been to the barricade, and here he is."

"To the barricade!" exclaimed the porter.

"He was killed. Go and wake his father."

The porter did not stir.

"Go!" continued Javert. And he added, "There will be a funeral here to-morrow."

For Javert, the ordinary incidents of the street were classified categorically, which is the beginning of foresight and oversight, and each contingency had its own compartment; possible facts were, as we may say, kept in drawers, whence they issued on occasion, in variable quantities. Under the head of street, came disturbance, riot, carnival, and funeral.

The porter contented himself with waking Basque. Basque woke Nicolette; Nicolette woke Aunt Gillenormand.

As for the grandfather, they let him sleep on, thinking that he would find it out quite soon enough, anyhow.

Marius was carried to the first-floor, no one in the other parts of the house knowing anything about it, and he was laid on an old sofa in M. Gillenormand's ante-room; and while Basque went to fetch a physician and Nicolette opened the linen-presses, Jean Valjean felt Javert touch his shoulder. He understood, and went down-stairs, Javert following close at his heels.

The porter saw them go, as he had seen them come, with startled sleepiness.

They got into the hackney coach, and the driver mounted his box.

"Inspector Javert," said Jean Valjean, "grant me one thing more."

"What is it?" answered Javert, roughly.

"Let me go home for a moment. Then you can do with me what you please."

Javert was silent for a few moments, with his chin thrust into the collar of his long coat; then he let down the front window.

"Driver," he said, "No. 7, Rue de l'Homme Armé."

CHAPTER XI

A SHOCK TO THE ABSOLUTE

THEY did not speak again during the entire drive.

What did Jean Valjean want? To finish what he had begun; to warn Cosette, tell her where Marius was, perhaps give her some useful information, and make, if he could, certain final arrangements. For his own part, so far as he personally was concerned, all was over; he had been arrested by Javert, and had not resisted. Any other man, in such a situation, would perhaps have thought vaguely of the rope which Thénardier had given him, and of the bars of the first cell he might enter; but since his meeting with the bishop, Jean Valjean had felt within him a profound religious hesitation against all violence, even against himself.

Suicide, that mysterious act of violence against the unknown, which may contain, to a certain extent, the death of the soul, was impossible to Jean Valjean.

On entering the Rue de l'Homme Armé the coach stopped, as the street was too narrow for vehicles to enter it. Jean Valjean and Javert got out.

The driver humbly represented to "Mr. Inspector" that the plush of his coach was quite spoiled by the blood of the assassinated man and the filth of the assassin (that is how he understood the affair), and he added that an indemnity was due to him. At the same time, taking his license-book from his pocket, he begged "Mr. Inspector" to be so kind as to write him "a little bit of a certificate." Javert thrust back the book which the driver offered him, and said:—

"How much do you want, including the time you waited and the journey?"

"It's seven hours and a quarter," answered the driver; "and my plush was brand-new. Eighty francs, 'Mr. Inspector.'"

Javert drew four napoleons from his pocket, and dismissed the hackney coach.

Jean Valjean thought that it was Javert's intention to take him on foot to the Blancs Manteaux police station, or the station near the Archives, both of which were close by.

They entered the street. It was, as usual, deserted.

Javert followed Jean Valjean. They reached No. 7. Valjean rapped. The door opened.

"Very good," said Javert. "Go up." He added, with a strange expression, and as if making an effort to speak as he was doing: "I will wait for you here."

Jean Valjean looked at Javert. This mode of conduct was not at all in accord with Javert's habits. Still, it could not surprise him greatly that Javert should now place in him a sort of haughty confidence,— the confidence of the cat which grants the mouse liberty to the length of its claws. Resolved, as he was, to surrender and have done with it all, this could not surprise him. He thrust open the door, entered the house, called to the porter, who was in bed and had pulled the string: "It is I!" and mounted the stairs.

On reaching the first-floor, he paused. Every Via Dolorosa has its stations. The window on the landing — a sash-window — was open. As is the case in many old houses, the staircase obtained light from, and looked out on, the street. The street-lantern, situated directly opposite, threw some little light on the stairs,— which saved the expense of a lamp.

Jean Valjean, either to breathe the air, or mechanically, thrust his head out of this window. He leaned into the street. It is short, and the lantern lit it from one end to the other. Jean Valjean was overwhelmed with amazement; there was no one there.

Javert had gone.

CHAPTER XII

THE GRANDFATHER

BASQUE and the porter had carried Marius, who still lay motionless on the sofa on which he had been placed on his arrival, into the drawing-room. The physician, who had been sent for, came hurriedly. Aunt Gillenormand had risen.

Aunt Gillenormand came and went, terrified, clasping her hands, and incapable of doing anything but saying, "Good heavens! Can it be possible?" She added, at intervals: "Everything will be covered with blood." When her first horror had passed off, a certain philosophy of the situation took possession of her, and was translated by the exclamation: "It was bound to end in this way!" She did not go so far as "I told you so!" which is usual on occasions of this nature.

By the surgeon's orders, a cot-bed was put up near the sofa. He examined Marius; and after satisfying himself that his pulse still beat, that the patient had no deep wound in the chest, and that the blood at the corners of the lips came from the nostrils, he had him laid flat on the bed, without a pillow, the head level with the body, and even a little lower, and with naked chest, in order to facilitate breathing. Mademoiselle Gillenormand, seeing that Marius was being undressed, withdrew. She fell to telling her beads in her bedroom.

There was no internal injury; a ball, deadened by the pocket-book, had turned aside and passed around the ribs with a frightful gash; but as it was not deep, it was, therefore, not dangerous. The long subterranean march had completed the dislocation of the broken collar-bone, and there were serious injuries there. The arms were covered with sabre-cuts. No scar disfigured the face, but the head was covered all over with cuts. What would be the result of these

wounds on the head? Did they stop at the scalp, or did they reach the brain? It was impossible to say, as yet. It was a serious symptom that they had caused this swoon, and people do not always wake from such fainting-fits; moreover, the hemorrhage had exhausted the wounded man. From the waist downward, his body had been protected by the barricade.

Basque and Nicolette tore up linen and prepared bandages; Nicolette sewed them, Basque rolled them. As they had no lint, the physician checked the effusion of blood temporarily with sheets of wadding. Beside the bed, three candles burned on the table where the surgeon's case of instruments lay open. The doctor bathed Marius's face and hair with cold water; a bucketful was reddened in an instant. The porter, candle in hand, lighted him.

The surgeon seemed to be meditating sadly. From time to time he shook his head, as if answering some question which he had mentally addressed to himself.

Such mysterious dialogues of the physician with himself are a bad sign for the patient.

As the surgeon was wiping Marius's face and gently touching his still closed eyelids with his finger, a door opened at the end of the room, and a tall, pale figure appeared.

It was the grandfather.

The riot had for two days past greatly agitated, offended, and absorbed M. Gillenormand. He had not been able to sleep on the previous night, and he had been in a fever all day. At night he went to bed very early, bidding his people bar up the house, and dozed off from sheer fatigue.

Old men sleep lightly. M. Gillenormand's bedroom joined the drawing-room, and, in spite of the precautions that had been taken, the noise awoke him. Surprised by the ray of light which he saw under his door, he got out of bed and groped his way thither.

He stood on the threshold, one hand on the handle of the half-open door, his head slightly bent forward and shaking, his body wrapped in a white dressing-gown, as straight and

creaseless as a winding-sheet. He was astounded; and he looked like a ghost peering into a tomb.

He saw the bed, and on the mattress, that young man bleeding, waxy pale, with closed eyes, open mouth, livid lips, naked to the waist, slashed all over with scarlet wounds, motionless, and brightly illumined.

The grandfather shuddered from head to foot as violently as his stiff limbs would let him; his eyes, whose cornea was yellow owing to his great age, were veiled by a sort of glassy stare; his entire face assumed in an instant the earthly angles of a fleshless skull; his arms fell limp, as if a spring had broken; and his stupor was displayed by the outspreading of the fingers of his trembling old hands; his knees formed a salient angle, displaying, through the opening of his dressing-gown, his poor bare legs bristling with white hairs, and he murmured: —

"Marius!"

"He has just been brought here, sir," said Basque. "He went to the barricade, and —"

"He is dead!" exclaimed the old gentleman, in a terrible voice. "Oh, the rascal!"

Then a sort of sepulchral transfiguration drew up this centenarian as straight as a young man.

"You are the surgeon, sir," he said. "First tell me one thing: he is dead, is he not?"

The surgeon, who was frightfully anxious, was silent.

M. Gillenormand wrung his hands with a burst of dreadful laughter.

"He is dead! He is dead! He let them kill him at the barricade! out of hatred to me! It was to spite me that he did it! Ah, the blood-drinker! this is the way he returns to me. Woe's my life, he is dead!"

He went to the window, threw it wide open, as if he were stifling, and standing there facing the darkness, he began talking into the street to the night.

"Stabbed, sabred, massacred, exterminated, slashed, cut to pieces! Only look at him, the beggar! He knew very well

that I expected him, and that I had his room ready, and that I had placed at my bed-head his portrait taken when he was a child! He knew very well that he had only to return, and that for years I had been recalling him, and that I sat at night by my fireside with my hands on my knees, not knowing what to do, and that he had driven me mad! You knew very well that you had only to return and say, 'It is I,' and you would be the master of the house, and I would obey you, and you could do anything you liked with your old ass of a grandfather! You knew it very well, and you said, 'No, he is a royalist; I will not go!' and you went to the barricades, and you let them kill you out of spite, to revenge yourself for what I said to you about the Duke de Berry! Is not that infamous? Go to bed and sleep quietly! He is dead. This is my awaking."

The surgeon, who was beginning to be anxious for both, left Marius for an instant, and going up to M. Gillenormand, took his arm. The grandfather turned, looked at him with eyes that seemed distended and bloodshot, and said calmly: —

"I thank you, sir; I am calm! I am a man; I saw the death of Louis XVI.; I know how to endure events. There is one thing terrible,— it is to think that it is your newspapers which do all the mischief. You must have scribblers, speakers, lawyers, orators, tribunes, discussions, progress, enlightenment, the rights of man, liberty of the press; and this is the way your children are brought home to you. Oh, Marius, it is abominable! Killed! dead before me! a barricade! oh, the villain! Doctor, you live in this quarter, I believe? Oh, yes, I know you well. I see your cab pass from my window. Well, I will tell you. You would do wrong to believe that I am in a passion. People do not fly into a passion with a dead man. That would be foolish. I brought this boy up. I was already old when he was still quite little. He played in the Tuileries garden with his little spade and his little chair; and in order that the inspectors should not scold, I used to fill up the holes which he made with his

spade with my cane. One day he cried, 'Down with Louis XVIII.!' and went off. It is not my fault. He was all pink and white. His mother is dead. Did you ever notice that all little children have fair hair? What do you think is the reason? He is a son of one of those brigands of the Loire, but children are not to blame for the crimes of their fathers. I remember him when he was so high. He could not manage to pronounce his *d*'s. He chattered so sweetly and so incomprehensibly that you might have fancied him a bird. I remember one day a circle was formed in front of the Farnese Hercules to admire that child, and marvel at him, he was so lovely. He had a head such as you see in pictures. I used to shout at him, and threaten him with my cane; but he knew very well that it was a joke. In the morning, when he entered my room, I scolded; but he was like the sunshine itself to me. You cannot defend yourself against these brats. They take possession of you, they hold you fast, they never let you go again. It is a fact that there never was a Cupid like that child. Now what have you to say for your Lafayette, your Benjamin Constant, and your Tirecuir de Corcelles, who have killed him for me? Such things cannot be permitted, I tell you."

He went up to Marius, who was still livid and motionless, and to whom the surgeon had returned and he began to wring his hands once more. The old man's white lips moved as if mechanically and allowed indistinct sentences to pass, which were scarcely audible: "Ah, heartless boy, ah, club-bist! ah, scoundrel! ah, Septembrist!"

Reproaches uttered in a low voice by a dying man to a corpse.

By degrees, as internal eruptions must always burst forth, the flood of words returned, but the grandfather seemed no longer to have the strength to utter them; his voice was so hollow and choked that it seemed to come from the other side of an abyss: —

"I do not care a bit; I will die too, I say. And to think that there is not a jade in Paris who would not have been delighted to make that scoundrel happy! — a scamp, who,

instead of amusing himself and enjoying life, went off to fight, and let himself be shot like a brute, and for whom? For what? For the republic, instead of going to dance at the Chaumière, as is the duty of young men! What's the use of being twenty years old? The Republic, a fine absurdity! Poor mothers, is that what you bring pretty boys into the world for! Well, he is dead. That will make two hearses at one door. So you have got yourself served like that for love of General Lamarque's fine eyes! What did General Lamarque ever do for you? A slasher! a chatterbox! To get one's self killed for a dead man! — is it not enough to drive one mad? Just think of it,— at twenty! and without once turning his head to see whether he had left anything behind him! The poor old fellows are obliged to die all alone nowadays. Rot in your corner, owl! Well, after all, so much the better. It is what I hoped for. This will kill me right off. I am too old; I am one hundred, I am a hundred thousand, and I ought by rights to have died long ago. Well, this blow settles it. It is all over,— what happiness! What is the use of making him inhale ammonia and all that pile of drugs? You ass of a doctor, you are wasting your time! There, he's dead,— quite dead. I know all about it, for I am dead too. He did not do the thing by halves. Yes, this age is infamous, infamous, infamous; and that is what I think of you, your ideas, your systems, your masters, your oracles, your doctors, your blackguards of writers, your rogues of philosophers, and all the revolutions which have startled the ravens of the Tuileries for the last sixty years! And since you were pitiless in letting yourself be killed like this, I will not even grieve at your death; do you hear, assassin?"

At this moment, Marius slowly opened his eyes, and his glance, still dim with lethargic wonder, rested on M. Gillenormand.

"Marius!" cried the old man. "Marius! my little Marius! my child! my beloved son! you open your eyes; you look at me; you are alive; thanks!"

And he fell fainting.

BOOK IV

JAVERT DERAILED

CHAPTER I

JAVERT OFF THE TRACK

JAVERT walked very slowly away from the Rue de l'Homme Armé.

He hung his head, for the first time in his life; and, also for the first time in his life, he held his hands behind his back.

Up to that day, Javert had copied, of Napoleon's two attitudes, only the one which expresses resolution, with arms folded on his breast; the one indicative of uncertainty — the hands behind the back — was unknown to him. Now a change had taken place; his whole person, slow and sombre, was stamped with anxiety.

He plunged into the silent streets.

But he followed a given direction.

He took the shortest cut to the Seine, reached the Quai des Ormes, walked along it, passed the Grêve, and paused not far from the Place du Châtelet, at the corner of the Pont Notre-Dame. Between that bridge and the Pont-au-Change on one side and the Quai de la Mégisserie and the Quai aux Fleurs on the other, the Seine forms a sort of square lake, traversed by a rapid.

This point of the Seine is feared by barge-men. Nothing is more dangerous than this rapid, hemmed in at this period, and irritated by the piles of the mill on the bridge, since

demolished. The two bridges, so close to each other, heighten the danger, for the water rushes terribly through the arches. It rolls up vast and angry waves; it is heaped and piled up; the stream strives to tear away the piles of the bridges with its strong liquid ropes. Men who fall in there do not reappear; the best of swimmers are drowned.

Javert leaned both elbows on the parapet, his chin on his hand, and while his hands were mechanically clenched in his thick whiskers, he mused.

A novelty, a revolution, a catastrophe had just taken place within him, and he must examine into it.

Javert was suffering horribly.

For some hours past, Javert had ceased to be simple. He was troubled: that brain, so limpid in its blindness, had lost its transparency; that crystal was clouded. Javert felt a divided duty, and he could not hide the fact from himself. When he met Jean Valjean so unexpectedly on the shore of the Seine, he felt something within him of the wolf who recaptures his prey and the dog who again finds his master.

He saw before him two roads, both equally straight,— but he saw two; and this terrified him, as he had never in his life known but one straight line. And — poignant agony — these two roads ran contrary to each other. One of these straight lines excluded the other. Which of the two was the true one?

His situation was indescribable.

To owe his life to a malefactor; to accept this debt and repay it; to be, in spite of himself, on the same footing with an escaped convict, and to requite his service with another service; to hear the words, "Be off!" and to say in his turn, "You are free!" to sacrifice to personal motives duty, that general obligation, and to feel in these personal motives something general too, and perhaps superior; to betray society in order to remain true to his conscience,— that all these absurdities should be realized, and should be heaped upon him, that was what overwhelmed him.

One thing astonished him,— that Jean Valjean had shown

him mercy; and one thing petrified him,— that he, Javert, had shown mercy to Jean Valjean.

How did he stand? He questioned his soul and found no answer.

What was he to do now? To deliver up Jean Valjean was bad; to leave Jean Valjean at liberty was bad. In the former case, the man of authority fell lower than the man of the galleys; in the second, a convict rose higher than the law, and set his foot upon it. In either case there was dishonour for him, Javert. Whatever resolution he might form, a fall was entailed. Destiny has certain extremities which rise perpendicularly from the impossible, beyond which life is only a precipice. Javert had reached one of these extremities.

One of his anxieties lay in being constrained to think. The very violence of all these contradictory emotions compelled him to do so. Now, thought was an unusual thing with him, and singularly painful. There is always in thought a certain amount of internal rebellion; and it irritated him to have that within him.

Thought no matter on what subject, outside the narrow circle of his duties, would in any case have been useless and wearisome to him; but to think about the day which had just passed was torture. And yet he must look into his conscience after such shocks, and render to himself an account of himself.

What he had just done made him shudder. He, Javert, had seen fit to decide upon a release contrary to all police regulations, contrary to the whole social and judicial organization, contrary to the entire code; that had suited him. He had substituted his own affairs for public affairs: was not this unjustifiable? Every time that he stood face to face with the nameless deed which he had done, he trembled from head to foot. What should he resolve on? Only one resource was left to him: to return at full speed to the Rue de l'Homme Armé and lock up Jean Valjean. It was clear that this was what he ought to do. He could not do it.

Something barred the way in that direction.

Something? What! is there anything in the world besides courts of justice, sentences, the police, and the authorities? Javert was overwhelmed.

A galley-slave sacred; a convict impregnable by justice; and this through the deed of Javert!

Was it not frightful that Javert and Jean Valjean,— the man made to punish, the man made to endure,— that these two men, who were both the property of the law, should have come to such a pass that both of them placed themselves above the law?

What! could such enormities happen and no one be punished? Should Jean Valjean, stronger than the whole social order, go free, and he, Javert, still eat the bread of the government?

His revery gradually became terrible.

He might also, through this revery have reproached himself on the subject of the insurgent carried home to the Rue des Filles du Calvaire; but he did not think of it. The lesser fault was lost in the larger. Besides, that insurgent was evidently a dead man; and, legally, death ends prosecution.

Jean Valjean,— that was the weight which he had on his mind.

Jean Valjean disconcerted him. All the axioms which had been the support of his whole life crumbled away before this man. The generosity of Jean Valjean to him, Javert, overwhelmed him. Other facts, which he now recalled, and which he had formerly treated as falsehoods and folly, now returned to his mind as realities. M. Madeleine re-appeared behind Jean Valjean, and the two figures were blended into one, which was venerable. Javert felt that something horrible — admiration for a convict — had entered his soul. Respect for a galley-slave,— is such a thing possible? He shuddered at it, and could not escape from it. He struggled in vain; he was reduced to admit, in his inmost heart, the sublimity of that villain. This was odious.

A benevolent malefactor, a compassionate, gentle, helpful,

and merciful convict, returning good for evil, pardon for hatred, preferring pity to vengeance, ready to destroy himself rather than his enemy, saving the man who smote him, kneeling on the pinnacle of virtue, and nearer akin to angels than to man,— Javert was constrained to confess to himself that this monster existed.

This could not last.

Assuredly — and we lay stress on this fact — he had not yielded without resistance to this monster, to this infamous angel, to this hideous hero, who enraged almost as much as he amazed him. Twenty times, as he sat in that hackney coach face to face with Jean Valjean, the legal tiger had roared within him. Twenty times he had felt tempted to hurl himself on Jean Valjean, to seize and devour him,— that is to say, arrest him. What more simple, in fact? To shout to the first police station which they passed, "Here is a convict who has broken his ban!" to call the police and say, "This man is yours!" then to go away, leaving the condemned man there; to know nothing more, and interfere no further. This man is forever the prisoner of the law; let the law do with him what it will. What could be fairer? Javert had said all this to himself; he had wished to carry it out, to act, to arrest the man, and then, as now, he was unable; and every time that his hand was raised convulsively to Jean Valjean's collar, it fell back as if under an enormous weight, and in the bottom of his heart he heard a voice, a strange voice, crying to him: "It is well. Deliver up your saviour; then send for Pontius Pilate's basin, and wash your claws."

Then his thoughts reverted to himself, and side by side with Jean Valjean aggrandized, he saw himself degraded.

A convict was his benefactor!

But why had he allowed that man to let him live? He had the right to be killed at that barricade. He should have asserted that right. It would have been better to call the other insurgents to his aid against Jean Valjean, and to be shot by main force.

His supreme agony was the disappearance of certainty.

He felt himself uprooted. The code was now a mere stump in his hand. He had to deal with scruples of an unknown species. A sentimental revelation had taken place within him, entirely distinct from legal affirmation, hitherto his sole standard of measure. It was not enough to remain in his old honesty. A whole order of unexpected facts arose and subjugated him. An entire new world appeared to his soul, — benefits accepted and returned; devotion, mercy, indulgence; violence done by pity to austerity; respect for persons; no final condemnation; no damnation; the possibility of a tear in the eye of the law; perhaps justice according to God, acting in inverse ratio to justice according to man. He perceived in the darkness the awful dawn of an unknown moral sun; he was horrified and dazzled. He was an owl forced to gaze with the eye of an eagle.

He said to himself that it was true, then, that there were exceptions; that authority might be put out of countenance; that the law might be inadequate to a fact; that everything was not contained within the text of the code; that the unforeseen must be obeyed; that the virtue of a convict might set a snare for the virtue of an official; that the monstrous might be divine; that destiny had such ambuscades; and he thought with despair that he himself had not been proof against surprise.

He was compelled to acknowledge that goodness existed. This galley-slave had been good and he, himself, strange to say, had also been good. Thus he had deteriorated.

He felt that he was a coward. He was horrified. It was not Javert's ideal to be human, grand or sublime; it was to be irreproachable. Now he had failed.

How had he reached this stage? how had all this happened? — he could not have told. He took his head between his hands — but in vain; he could not succeed in explaining it.

He had certainly always intended to deliver Jean Valjean over to the law, whose captive Jean Valjean was and whose slave he,— Javert, was. He had not confessed to himself for a single instant, while he held him in his grasp, that he had

a thought of letting him go. It was to some extent unconsciously that his hand had opened and allowed him to escape.

All sorts of puzzling questions passed before his eyes. He questioned himself and answered himself; and his answers terrified him. He asked himself: "What has this convict done, this desperate man, whom I pursued even unto persecution, and who had me under his heel, and could have avenged himself, and owed it, both to his rancour and to his security to do so,— what has he done in leaving me my life, and showing me mercy? His duty? No. Something more. And what have I done in showing him mercy in my turn — my duty? No. Something more. Is there, then, something higher than duty?" Here, he took fright; he was thrown off his balance. One scale sank into the abyss, the other rose toward heaven; and Javert felt no less terror for the one which rose than for the one which sank. Without being the least in the world what is called a Voltairean, or a philosopher, or an unbeliever, on the contrary, instinctively respectful toward the Established Church, he knew it only as an august fragment of the social whole; order was his dogma, and sufficed for him.

Since he had attained to man's estate and to office, he had set nearly all his religion in the police. He was — and we use the words without the slightest irony, and in their most serious sense,— he was, as we have said, a spy as another man is a priest. He had a superior,— M. Gisquet; but up to this day he had never thought of that other superior — God.

He became unexpectedly aware of the presence of this new Chief, God, and was embarrassed by him.

This unforeseen presence threw him off his balance. He knew not what to do with this Superior, for he was well aware that a subordinate is always bound to bow his head; that he must neither disobey, nor blame, nor discuss; and that, with a superior who astonishes him too much, an inferior has no resource but to hand in his resignation.

But how could he manage to hand in his resignation to God?

However this might be, and it was to this that he constantly returned, one fact towered above everything else,— he had just committed a frightful infraction of the law. He had closed his eyes to an escaped convict who had broken his ban; he had set a galley-slave at liberty; he had robbed the laws of a man who belonged to them: he had done this. He no longer understood himself; he was not certain of being himself. The very reasons for his deed eluded him; the dizziness that they produced was left to him. Up to this moment he had lived in that blind faith which a gloomy probity engenders. This faith had quitted him; this probity had failed him. All that he had believed in had vanished. Truths which he did not desire inexorably besieged him. He must hence forth be another man. He suffered the strange pangs of a conscience suddenly operated on for a cataract. He saw what he loathed to see. He felt that he was spent, useless, out of joint with his past life, discharged, dissolved. Authority was dead within him. He had no longer any reason for living.

Terrible situation,— to feel emotion!

To be made of granite, and to doubt; to be the statue of Punishment cast in one solid piece in the mould of the law, and suddenly to perceive that you have within your bosom of bronze something absurd and disobedient, which almost resembles a heart; to come to the pass of returning good for good, though you have always said to yourself that such good is evil; to be the watch-dog, and to fawn; to be ice, and melt; to be a pair of pincers, and become a hand; to feel your fingers suddenly open; to lose your hold,— what a frightful thing!

The man-projectile, no longer knowing his course, and retreating!

To be obliged to confess this: infallibility is not infallible, there may be an error in dogma, all is not said when a code has spoken, society is not perfect, authority is com-

plicated with vacillation, there may be a flaw in the immutable, judges are men, the law may err, courts may make a mistake! — to see a rift in the immense blue window of the firmament!

That which had taken place in Javert was the Fampoux of a rectilinear conscience, the derailment of a soul, the crushing of a probity irresistibly hurled in a straight line, and breaking itself against God. It was certainly strange that the stoker of order, the engineer of authority mounted on the blind iron horse, on the unyielding course, could be unseated by a flash of light! That the immutable, the direct, the correct, the geometrical, the passive, the perfect, could bend! That there should be for the locomotive a road to Damascus!

God, ever within man, and himself the true conscience, refractory to the false; the spark forbidden to expire; the ray ordered to remember the sun; the soul enjoined to recognize the true absolute when confronted with the fictitious absolute; imperishable humanity; the immortal human heart, — did Javert comprehend this splendid phenomenon, the most glorious, perhaps, of all our inner marvels? Did he penetrate it? Did he explain it to himself? Evidently not; but under the pressure of this undoubted incomprehensibility he felt his brain cracking.

He was less transfigured by, than a victim to, this prodigy. He endured it, with exasperation. He saw in all this only the vast difficulty of existence. It seemed to him as if henceforth his breathing would be eternally impeded. He was not accustomed to have something unknown hanging over his head.

Hitherto everything above him had been, to his gaze, a smooth, simple, limpid surface; there was nothing unknown or obscure; nothing but what was defined, arranged in order, connected, precise, exact, circumscribed, limited, closed; everything foreseen; authority was a flat surface; there was no irregularity about it, no dizziness in its presence. Javert had never seen the unknown except below him. The irregular, the unexpected, the disorderly opening of chaos, the possible

slip over a precipice,— all this was peculiar to the lower regions, rebels, the wicked, and the wretched. Now Javert threw himself back, and was suddenly startled by this extraordinary apparition,— a gulf above him!

What! was the world dismantled from top to bottom? Absolutely disconcerted! In what could men trust! All conventions were giving way! What! the flaw in the cuirass of society could be discovered by a magnanimous scoundrel? What! an honest servant of the law could suddenly find himself caught between two crimes,— the crime of letting a man escape and the crime of arresting him. All was not certain, then, in the orders given by the State to the official; there might be blind alleys in duty! What! was all this real? Was it true that an ex-ruffian, weighed down with criminal sentences, could draw himself up and end by being in the right? Was this credible? Were there, then, cases where the law must retire before transfigured crime, and stammer its apologies? Yes, it was so; and Javert saw it; and Javert touched it; and not only could he not deny it, but he had a share in it. These were realities. It was abominable that actual facts could attain to such deformity. If facts did their duty, they would confine themselves to being proofs of the law; for facts are sent by God. Was anarchy, then, about to descend from on high?

Thus,— and in the exaggeration of agony, and the optical illusion of consternation, everything which might have limited and corrected his impression faded away, and society, the human race, the universe, were henceforth contained for his eyes in one simple and hideous feature,— thus the penal law, the thing judged, the force due to legislation, the decrees of sovereign courts, the magistracy, the government, prevention and repression, official wisdom, legal infallibility, the principle of authority, all the dogmas on which rest political and civil security, sovereignty, justice, the logical consequences of the code, public truth,— all this was rubbish, ruins, chaos; he himself, Javert, the night-watchman of order, incorruptibility in the service of the police, the bull-dog providence of

society, conquered and hurled to the ground; and on the summit of all this ruin stood a man in a green cap, with a halo about his brow,— such was the state of overthrow he had reached; such the frightful vision which he had in his soul.

Was this to be endured? No.

It was a violent state, if ever there was one. There were only two ways of escaping from it. One, was to go resolutely to Jean Valjean, and to restore to his dungeon the man of the galleys. The other —

Javert left the parapet, and, with head now held high, went with firm step toward the station house, indicated by a lantern at one corner of the Place du Châtelet.

On reaching it, he saw through the window a police-sergeant, and went in. Policemen recognize each other merely by the way in which they push open the door of a station house. Javert mentioned his name, showed his card to the sergeant, and sat down at the table, on which a candle burned. On the table lay a pen, a leaden inkstand, and paper, in case it should be necessary to draw up a report, and the assignments of the night patrols. This table, always completed by a straw chair, is an institution; it exists in all police stations. It is always adorned with a boxwood saucer full of sawdust, and a pasteboard box filled with red wafers, and it is the lowest stage of official style. It is here that the literature of the State begins.

Javert took the pen and a sheet of paper and began to write. This is what he wrote:—

A FEW REMARKS FOR THE GOOD OF THE SERVICE.

1. I beg Me le Préfet to cast his eyes on this.

2. Prisoners, on their return from examination at the magistrate's office, take off their shoes and remain barefoot on the flagstones while they are being searched. Many cough when they return to prison. This entails hospital expenses.

3. It is all very well to follow a criminal with relays of men

at regular intervals; but on important occasions, two policemen, at the least, should keep each other in sight, because, if for any reason one man should weaken, the other would watch him and take his place.

4. It is inexplicable that the special rules of the prison of the Madelonnettes should forbid a prisoner to have a chair, even if he pay for it.

5. At the Madelonnettes there are only two iron bars to the canteen, which allows the canteen woman to touch hands with the prisoners.

6. The prisoners called "barkers," who summon other prisoners to the visitors' parlour, demand two sous of each prisoner for calling his name distinctly. This is robbery.

7. Ten sous are stopped from a prisoner working in the weaving-room for every loose thread. This is an abuse on the part of the superintendent, as the cloth is none the worse.

8. It is annoying for visitors to La Force to be obliged to pass through the boy's court in order to reach the parlour of St. Marie l'Egyptienne.

9. It is a fact that officers are daily heard repeating in the courtyard of the prefecture, the questions put to prisoners by magistrates. For an officer, who ought to be sworn to secrecy, to repeat what he has heard in the office, is a serious breach of duty.

10. Madame Henry is an honest woman; her canteen is very clean; but it is bad to have a woman hold open the door of the mousetrap that leads to prison. It is unworthy of the Conciergerie of a great civilization.

Javert wrote these lines in his calmest and most correct handwriting, not omitting a single comma, and making the paper creak beneath his pen. Below the last line he signed,—

JAVERT,

Inspector of the 1st class,
Station in the Place du Châtelet, June 7, 1832, about one in the morning.

Javert dried the fresh ink on the paper, folded it like a letter, sealed it, wrote on the back: *Note for the Administration*, left it on the table, and quitted the guard-room. The glass door closed behind him.

He again crossed the Place du Châtelet diagonally, regained the quay, and went back with automatic precision to the same spot which he had left a quarter of an hour previously, leaned on his elbows again; found himself in the same attitude on the same parapet slab. It seemed as if he had not stirred.

The darkness was complete. It was the sepulchral moment which follows midnight. A ceiling of clouds hid the stars. The sky hung heavy overhead. The houses in the city did not display a single light; no one passed; all the streets and quays in sight were deserted; Notre-Dame and the towers of the Palais de Justice seemed features of the night. A street-lamp reddened the edge of the quay. The outline of the bridges looked shapeless in the mist, one behind the other. Rains had swollen the river.

The spot where Javert was leaning was, it will be remembered, exactly over the rapids of the Seine, perpendicularly above that fearful ring of whirlpools which open and close again like an endless screw.

Javert bent his head and looked. All was dark. Nothing could be made out. A sound of spray was audible, but the river was invisible. At moments, in that dizzy depth, a gleam appeared and undulated vaguely, for water has the power, even in the darkest night, of obtaining light, no one knows whence, and changing it into a snake. The gleam faded away, and all became indistinct again. Immensity seemed to yawn before him. That which lay below him was not water, but an awful gulf. The quay-wall, abrupt, confused, mingled with vapours, then hidden, produced the effect of an infinite precipice. Nothing could be seen, but the hostile chill of the water and the sickly smell of the damp stones could be felt. A fierce breath rose from this abyss. The swelling of the river, divined rather than perceived, the tragic

murmur of the waves, the mournful vastness of the bridge arches, a possible fall into that gloomy space,— all that shadow was full of horror.

Javert remained for some moments motionless, gazing at this opening into darkness; he studied the invisible with an intentness which resembled attention. The water roared. All at once he took off his hat and placed it on the edge of the quay. A moment after, a tall, black figure, which a belated passer-by might have taken at a distance for a ghost, appeared, standing on the parapet, stooped toward the Seine, then drew itself up, and fell straight down into the darkness: there was a dull splash; and the shadows alone were in the secret of the convulsions of that dark form which had disappeared beneath the water.

BOOK V

GRANDSON AND GRANDFATHER.

CHAPTER I

IN WHICH THE TREE WITH THE ZINC PLASTER APPEARS AGAIN

SOME time after the events which we have just recorded, the Sieur Boulatruelle experienced a lively emotion.

The Sieur Boulatruelle is the road-mender of Montfermeil of whom we have already caught a glimpse in the dark portions of this book.

Boulatruelle, it will perhaps be remembered, was a man occupied with various and troubled things. He broke stones and damaged travellers on the highway. Road-mender and robber as he was, he had a dream,— he believed in the treasures buried in the forest of Montfermeil. He hoped some day to find money in the ground at the foot of a tree; meantime he readily sought it in the pockets of passers-by.

Still, for the present, he was prudent. He had just had a narrow escape. He was, as we know, picked up with the other ruffians in Jondrette's garret. Vice is some times useful: his drunkenness saved him. It was never decided whether he was there as a robber or as a victim. He was set at liberty on account of his well-proven intoxication on the night of the attack. He took to his heels, and went back to his road from Gagny to Lagny, to break stones for the State, under government supervision, with hanging head, in pensive mood, his ardour for theft somewhat cooled by his narrow

escape, but turning with all the more tenderness to the wine which had saved him.

As for the lively emotion which he had experienced a short time after his return to his turf-thatched cabin, it was this: One morning, Boulatruelle, going as usual to his work and perhaps to his lurking-place, just before daybreak, saw among the branches a man, whose back alone was visible, but whose shoulders, so it seemed to him through the mist and darkness, were not entirely unknown to him. Boulatruelle, though a drunkard, had a correct and lucid memory,— a weapon of defence indispensable to any man who is at all on bad terms with legal order.

"Where the deuce have I seen some one like that man?" he asked. But he could give himself no answer, save that the fellow resembled somebody of whom he had a confused recollection.

Boulatruelle, however, made his guesses and calculations, though he was unable to settle the identity. This man did not belong to those parts. He had just come there. Evidently afoot. No public conveyance passes through Montfermeil at that hour. He must have been walking all night.

Where did he come from? No great distance; for he had neither haversack nor bundle. Doubtless from Paris. Why was he in this wood? Why was he here at such an hour? What did he want here?

Boulatruelle thought of the treasure. By dint of racking his memory, he vaguely remembered having had, several years previous, a similar alarm in connection with a man, who might very well be this man.

While meditating, he had, under the very weight of his meditation, hung his head, a natural but not a clever thing to do. When he raised it again, the man had disappeared in the forest and the mist.

"The devil!" said Boulatruelle. "I will find him again. I'll ferret out the parish of that parishioner. This straggler from Patron-Minette has a motive, and I'll know it. No

one shall have a secret in my forest without my having 'a finger in the pie.'"

He took up his pick, which was very sharp.

"Here's something," he growled, "with which to search the ground and a man."

And as one thread is knotted to another thread, he began to stride through the coppice as fast as he could, in the direction which the man must have followed.

When he had gone about a hundred yards, day, which was beginning to break, aided him. Footprints on the sand, here and there, trampled grass, broken heather, young branches in the bushes bent and rising with graceful deliberation, like the arms of a pretty woman who stretches herself on waking, gave him a sort of trail. He followed it, then he lost it. Time was slipping away. He plunged deeper into the wood, and came to a sort of eminence. An early sportsman passing in the distance along a path, and whistling the air of "Guillery," gave him the idea of climbing up a tree. Although old, he was agile. There was, close by, a very large beech, worthy of Tityrus and Boulatruelle. Boulatruelle climbed the beech as high as he could.

The idea was a good one. While exploring the solitude on the side where the wood is most entangled, and wild, Boulatruelle suddenly caught sight of the man.

No sooner had he seen him than he lost sight of him.

The man entered, or rather glided into, a clearing somewhat remote and masked by large trees, but which Boulatruelle knew very well, because he had noticed, near a large heap of stones, a sickly chestnut-tree, bandaged with a zinc belt nailed directly upon the bark. This clearing is what was formerly called the Blaru glade. The pile of stones, intended for no one knows what purpose, which lay there thirty years ago, is doubtless there still. Nothing equals the longevity of a heap of stones, except that of a plank boarding. It is there temporarily. What a reason for lasting!

Boulatruelle, with the rapidity of joy, tumbled off the tree, rather than came down from it. The lair was found, and

now he had only to seize the wild beast. The famous treasure he had dreamed of was probably there.

It was no small undertaking to reach the clearing. By beaten paths, which made a thousand annoying zigzags, it would take a good quarter of an hour. In a bee-line through the underbrush, which is singularly dense, very thorny, and most aggressive just there, it would take half an hour at least. Boulatruelle was wrong in not understanding this; he believed in the straight line,— a respectable optical illusion, but one which has ruined many men. The underbrush, bristling though it was, appeared to him the right road.

"Let us go by the Rue de Rivoli of the wolves," said he.

Boulatruelle, accustomed to crooked paths, now made the mistake of going straight.

He plunged resolutely into the bushes. He had to contend with holly, nettles, hawthorns, briers, thistles, and most irascible brambles. He was fearfully scratched.

At the bottom of the ravine he came to a stream, which he was obliged to cross.

At last he reached the Blaru glade, after the lapse of forty minutes, perspiring, wet through, breathless, scratched, and ferocious.

There was no one in the clearing.

Boulatruelle hurried to the heap of stones. It was still in its place. It had not been carried off.

As for the man, he had vanished in the forest. He had escaped. Where? In what direction? Into which clump of trees? Impossible to guess.

And, heartrending to relate, there, behind the heap of stones, in front of the zinc-banded tree, was freshly turned earth, a pick, forgotten or abandoned, and a hole.

The hole was empty.

"Thief!" cried Boulatruelle, shaking his fists at space.

CHAPTER II

MARIUS, QUITTING CIVIL WAR, PREPARES FOR DOMESTIC WAR

MARIUS was for a long time neither dead nor alive. He had, for several weeks, a fever accompanied by delirium, and by very serious cerebral symptoms, caused by the shock of the wounds on the head rather than by the wounds themselves.

He repeated Cosette's name for whole nights with the lugubrious loquacity of fever and the gloomy obstinacy of agony. The extent of certain wounds presented a serious danger; for the suppuration of large wounds is always liable to be re-absorbed into the system, and, consequently, to kill the patient, under certain atmospheric influences. At each change in the weather, at the slightest storm, the physician became anxious. "Mind that the patient suffers from no emotion," he repeated. The dressings were complicated and difficult, for the fixing of bandages and lint by sticking-plaster had not been invented at that period. Nicolette used up for lint a sheet "as big as the ceiling," as she said. It was not without difficulty that chlorureted lotions and nitrate of silver conquered the gangrene. So long as there was danger, M. Gillenormand, broken-hearted by the bedside of his grandson, was, like Marius, neither dead nor alive.

Every day, and sometimes twice a day, a white-haired, well-dressed gentleman — such was the description given by the porter — came to inquire after the wounded man, and left a large parcel of lint for the dressings.

At length, on September 7, four months to a day from the sad night on which he was brought home to his grandfather dying, the physician declared that he would answer for him. Convalescence set in. Marius, however, was obliged to lie for two months longer on a couch, on account of his broken collar-bone. There is always a last wound which will not

close, and which prolongs the dressings indefinitely, to the great annoyance of the patient. This long illness and lengthened convalescence, however, saved him from prosecution. In France, there is no anger, even public, which six months does not extinguish. Riots, in the present state of society, are so much the fault of every one that they are followed by a certain necessity for closing the eyes.

Let us add that Gisquet's unjustifiable decree, which compelled physicians to denounce their patients, having outraged opinion,— and not merely opinion, but the king himself,— the wounded were covered and protected by this indignation; and, with the exception of those taken prisoners in the act of fighting, the courts-martial did not dare to molest any one. Hence Marius was left in peace.

M. Gillenormand first passed through every form of agony and then through every form of ecstasy. Great difficulty was found in keeping him from watching every night with the wounded man, he had his large easy-chair brought to the bedside; he insisted that his daughter should take the finest linen in the house for compresses and bandages. Mlle. Gillenormand, like a sensible and elderly lady, managed to save the fine linen, while allowing her father to believe that he was obeyed. M. Gillenormand would not permit any one to explain to him that, for the purpose of making lint, fine linen is not so good as coarse, or new so good as worn. He was present at all the dressings, from which Mlle. Gillenormand modestly absented herself. When the dead flesh was cut away with scissors, he said, "Ow! ow!" Nothing was so touching as to see him hand the wounded man a cup of broth with his gentle, trembling old hand. He overwhelmed the surgeon with questions, and did not perceive that he constantly repeated the same ones.

On the day when the physician informed him that Marius was out of danger, he was beside himself. He gave his porter three louis d'or, and at night, when he went to his bedroom, he danced a gavotte, making castanets of his thumb and forefinger, and sang a song something like this:—

"Jane was born at Fougère,—
True nest of a shepherdess fair:
I gaze with loving eye
At her petticoat sly.

"Cupid dwells within her heart.
And he hides his dart
In her eye;
Archer sly!

"I sing her praises, and I love,
Chaste Diana e'en above,
My Jenny and her eye
So sly."

Then he knelt on a chair, and Basque, who was watching him through the crack of the door, was sure that he was praying.

Up to that day he had never believed in God.

At each new phase of improvement, which became more and more decided, the grandfather went almost mad. He performed a multitude of mechanical actions full of delight; he went up and down stairs without knowing why. A neighbour's wife (who was very pretty, by the way) was amazed one morning at receiving a large bouquet; M. Gillenormand sent it to her. Her husband got up a jealous scene. M. Gillenormand tried to draw Nicolette on his knees. He called Marius "Monsieur le Baron." He shouted, "Long live the Republic!"

He asked the doctor again and again: "There is no danger now, is there?" He looked at Marius with the eyes of a grandmother. He gloated over him while he ate. He no longer knew himself, no longer took himself into account. Marius was the master of the house; there was abdication in his joy,— he was the grandson of his grandson.

In his present state of merriment he was the most venerable of children. For fear of wearying or annoying the convalescent, he would step behind him to smile upon him. He was content, joyous, enchanted, charming, young. His white hair added a gentle majesty to the gay radiance of his

face. When grace is mingled with wrinkles, it is adorable. There is a peculiar light of dawn in blooming old age.

As for Marius, while he allowed them to nurse and pet him, he had one fixed idea,— Cosette.

Since the fever and delirium had left him, he had ceased to utter her name, and it might have been supposed that he had forgotten her. He was silent, just because his soul was fixed on her.

He knew not what had become of Cosette; the whole affair of the Rue de la Chanvrerie was like a cloud in his memory; shadows, almost indistinct, floated through his mind. Eponine, Gavroche, Mabœuf, the Thénardiers, all his friends, mournfully mingled with the smoke of the barricade; the strange passage of M. Fauchelevent through that blood-stained adventure produced upon him the effect of an enigma in a tempest. He understood nothing of his own life, he knew not how or by whom he had been saved, and no one about him knew it either; all they were able to tell him was that he had been brought there at night in a hackney coach. Past, present, and future,— all this was to him like the mist of a vague idea; but in this mist there was one immovable point, one clear and precise feature, one thing made of granite, a resolution, a will,— to find Cosette once more. For him, the idea of life was not distinct from the idea of Cosette. He had decreed in his heart that he would not accept the one without the other, and he was unalterably determined to demand of whosoever should desire to force him to live,— of his grandfather, of destiny, of fate, of hell itself,— the restitution of his lost Eden.

He did not disguise the obstacles.

Here let us emphasize one fact: he was not won over or greatly softened by all the anxiety and all the tenderness of his grandfather. In the first place, he was not in the secret of them all; then, in his sick man's reveries, which were, perhaps, still feverish, he distrusted this gentleness as a strange and novel thing intended to subdue him. He remained cold to it. The poor grandfather lavished his smiles in vain.

Marius said to himself that it was all very well, so long as he (Marius) did not speak, and let matters rest; but that when it came to talking of Cosette, he should find another face, and his grandfather's real attitude would be unmasked. Then there would be a scene, a revival of family questions, a comparison of positions, all manner of sarcasms and objections at once,— Fauchelevent, Coupelevent, fortune, poverty, wretchedness, a stone about his neck, the future. Violent resistance; the conclusion: a refusal. Marius stiffened himself against it in advance.

And then, in proportion as he regained life, his old wrongs re-appeared, the old ulcers of his memory re-opened. He again thought of the past; Colonel Pontmercy placed himself once more between M. Gillenormand and him, Marius, and he said to himself that he had no real kindness to hope for from a man who had been so unjust and harsh to his father. And with health, there returned a sort of bitterness toward his grandfather, from which the old man suffered silently.

M. Gillenormand, without letting it be seen, noticed that Marius, since he had been brought home and had regained consciousness, had never once called him father. He did not say "sir," it is true; but he managed to say neither the one nor the other, by a certain way of turning his sentences.

A crisis was evidently approaching.

As almost always happens in such cases, Marius, in order to test himself, skirmished before offering battle. This is called "feeling the ground." One morning, it happened that M. Gillenormand, alluding to a newspaper which he had come across, spoke lightly of the Convention, and let fly a royalist epigram at Danton, St. Just, and Robespierre. "The men of '93 were giants," said Marius, sternly. The old man was silent, and did not utter another syllable all day.

Marius, the inflexible grandfather of his early years ever present to his mind, saw in this silence a profound concentration of anger, augured from it an obstinate struggle, and made increased preparations for a contest in his innermost mind.

He determined that in case of refusal, he would tear off his bandages, dislocate his collar-bone, lay bare all the wounds still unhealed, and refuse all food. His wounds were his ammunition. He must have Cosette or die.

He awaited the favourable moment with the crafty impatience of sick persons. The moment came.

CHAPTER III

MARIUS ATTACKS

ONE day M. Gillenormand, while his daughter was arranging the phials and cups on the marble slab of the chest of drawers, leaned over Marius, and said in his most tender tones:—

"See here, my little Marius, if I were you, I would rather eat meat than fish now. A fried sole is excellent at the beginning of convalescence, but a good cutlet is the thing to put a sick man on his legs."

Marius, whose strength had almost wholly returned, summoned it all, sat up, rested his two clenched fists on the sheets, looked his grandfather in the face, assumed a terrible air, and said:—

"That leads me to say something to you."

"What is it?"

"That I wish to marry."

"All settled," said the grandfather, bursting into a laugh.

"How settled?"

"Yes, settled. You shall have your little maid."

Marius, amazed and bewildered, trembled in every limb. M. Gillenormand continued:—

"Yes, you shall have the pretty little dear. She comes every day in the form of an old gentleman to ask after you. Ever since you were wounded she has spent her time in cry-

ing and making lint. I made inquiries. She lives at No. 7, Rue de l'Homme Armé. Ah, there we are! Ah, you want her, do you? Well, you shall have her. I've got you there! You had laid your little plot. You said to yourself: 'I will put it point-blank to that grandfather of mine, that mummy of the Regency and the Directory, that old beau, that Dorante turned Géronte. He has had his frolics too, and his love affairs, and his shop-girls, and his Cosettes; he has had his fling, he has had his fly, he has eaten the bread of spring; he must surely remember it. We shall see. Battle!' Ah, you take the bull by the horns. All right. I offer you a cutlet, and you answer me, 'By the by, I wish to marry.' By Jupiter Ammon, that is a transition! Ah, you made up your mind for a quarrel! You did not know that I was an old coward. What do you say to that? You are sold. You did not expect to find your grandfather sillier than yourself. You have. The speech you meant to make me is wasted, master lawyer; and that is a pity. Well, so much the worse; rage away. I'll do what you wish, and that cuts your speech short, simpleton. Listen! I have made my inquiries, for I am cunning too; she is charming, she is virtuous, the lancer does not speak the truth, she has made heaps of lint. She is a jewel; she adores you. If you had died, there would have been three of us. Her coffin would have accompanied mine. I had an idea, so soon as you were better, of just planting her there by your bedside; but it is only in novels that girls are brought right to the beds of handsome young wounded men in whom they take an interest. That would not do. What would your aunt say? You were quite naked three-quarters of the time, sir. Ask Nicolette, who never left you for a moment, whether it was possible to have a woman here. And then, what would the doctor have said? A pretty girl does not tend to cure a fever. Well, say no more about it; it is settled and done; it's fixed; take her. Such is my cruelty. Look here; I saw that you did not love me, and I said: 'What can I do to make that creature love me?' I said, 'Stay! I have my little Cosette right at hand.

I will give her to him, and then he must love me a little, or tell the reason why.' Ah, you thought that the old man would storm, talk big, cry 'No,' and lift his cane against all this day-dawn. Not at all. Cosette,— so be it; love,— so be it; I ask for nothing better. Pray, take the trouble, sir, to marry. Be happy, my beloved child!"

So saying, the old man burst into sobs.

He took Marius's head and pressed it to his old bosom, and both began to weep. That is one of the forms of supreme happiness.

"My father!" exclaimed Marius.

"Ah, you love me then?" said the old man.

There was an ineffable moment. They were choking and could not speak. At length the old man stammered:

"Come! the stopper is taken out of him. He called me father."

Marius freed his head from his grandfather's arms, and said gently:—

"Now that I am well, father, I think I might see her."

"Settled, too; you shall see her to-morrow."

"Father!"

"Well, what?"

"Why not to-day?"

"Well, to-day. To-day it shall be. You have called me father thrice, and it's worth that. I will see about it. She shall be brought here. Settled, I tell you. It has already been put into verse. It is the end of André Chénier's elegy, the 'Jeune malade,'— André Chénier, who was butchered by the vill — by the giants of '93."

M. Gillenormand fancied he could see a slight frown on Marius's face, though(truth to tell, he was not listening, as he had flown away into ecstasy, and was thinking much more of Cosette than of 1793.

The grandfather, trembling at having introduced André Chénier so inopportunely, hurriedly continued:

"Butchered is not the word. The fact is, that the great revolutionary geniuses, who were not wicked (that is incon-

testable,— who were heroes, by Jove!), found that André Chénier was slightly in their way, and they had him guillo — That is to say, those great men, on the 7th Thermidor, begged André Chénier, in the interests of public safety, to be kind enough to go —"

M. Gillenormand, garroted by his own sentence, could not continue. Unable to end it or to retract it, while his daughter arranged the pillows behind Marius, who was exhausted by his emotions, the old man rushed, with all the speed which his age allowed, out of the bedroom, shut the door after him, and purple, choking, and foaming, with his eyes starting from his head, found himself nose to nose with honest Basque, who was cleaning boots in the anteroom. He seized Basque by the collar, and shouted furiously in his face: "By the hundred thousand Javottes of the devil, those scoundrels did assassinate him!"

"Who?"

"André Chénier."

"Yes, sir," said Basque in alarm.

CHAPTER IV

MLLE. GILLENORMAND CEASES TO THINK IT A BAD THING THAT M. FAUCHELEVENT SHOULD COME IN WITH SOMETHING UNDER HIS ARM.

COSETTE and Marius saw each other once more.

We will not attempt to describe the interview. There are things which one must not attempt to paint; the sun is of the number.

The whole family, Basque and Nicolette included, were assembled in Marius's chamber at the moment when Cosette entered.

She appeared in the doorway; she seemed to him to be surrounded by a halo.

At that very moment the grandfather was about to blow his nose; he stopped short, holding his nose in his handkerchief and looking over it at Cosette:—

"Adorable!" he cried.

And then he blew a sonorous blast.

Cosette was intoxicated, enchanted, frightened, in heaven. She was as timid as one may be made by happiness. She stammered, turned pale, then flushed, longed to throw herself into Marius's arms, and dared not. She was ashamed of loving before so many people. The world is merciless to happy lovers; people always remain when the latter most long to be alone. And yet lovers need no other company than their own.

With Cosette, and behind her, entered a white-haired man, serious, yet smiling, though his smile was vague and heartrending. It was "Monsieur Fauchelevent,"—it was Jean Valjean.

He was "very well dressed," as the porter had said, in a new black suit and a white cravat.

The porter was a thousand leagues from recognizing in this correct citizen, this probable notary, the frightful corpse-bearer who had appeared at the door on the night of June 7, ragged, filthy, hideous, haggard, with a mask of blood and mud on his face, holding in his arms the unconscious Marius; still, his porter's instincts were aroused. When M. Fauchelevent arrived with Cosette, the porter could not refrain from confiding this aside to his wife: "I don't know why, but I fancy that I have seen that face before."

M. Fauchelevent in Marius's room stood apart by the door. He had under his arm a packet closely resembling an octavo volume wrapped in paper. The paper was of a greenish hue, and seemed mouldy.

"Does this gentleman always carry a book under his arm like that?" Mlle. Gillenormand, who was not fond of books, asked Nicolette in a whisper.

"Well," replied M. Gillenormand, who had overheard her, in the same key, "he is a learned man. What then? Is

that his fault? Monsieur Boulard, whom I once knew, never went out without a book either, and always had some old volume hugged to his heart like that."

Then bowing, he said aloud:—

"Monsieur Tranchelevent [Father Gillenormand did not do it purposely, but inattention to proper names was an aristocratic way of his], Monsieur Tranchelevent, I have the honour to ask you for this lady's hand, for my grandson, Baron Marius Pontmercy."

Monsieur "Tranchelevent" bowed.

"All right," said the grandfather.

And turning to Marius and Cosette, with both arms extended to bless them, he cried:—

"You have leave to adore each other."

They did not wait to be told twice. The billing and cooing began. They talked in a whisper, Marius reclining on his couch, Cosette standing beside him.

"Oh, heavens!" murmured Cosette, "I see you once again! It is you,— it is really you! To go and fight like that! But why? It is horrible! For four months I have been dead. Oh, how wicked it was of you to join in that battle! What had I done to you? I forgive you, but you must never do so again. Just now, when they came to tell us to come to you, I thought again that I was going to die, but it was of joy. I was so sad! I did not take the time to dress myself; I must look frightful. What will your relatives say to see me with a tumbled collar? But speak! You make me do all the talking. We are still in the Rue de l'Homme Armé. It seems that your shoulder was terrible. I was told that I could put my fist in it. And then it seems that your flesh was cut with scissors. How frightful that is! I cried so that I have no eyes left. It is strange that a person can suffer like that. Your grandfather looks very kind. Don't move; don't lean on your elbow like that. Take care, or you will do yourself an injury. Oh, how happy I am! So our misfortunes are ended! I am quite foolish. There were things I wanted to say to you and now I have

quite forgotten what they were. Do you love me still? We live in the Rue de l'Homme Armé. There is no garden there. I made lint the whole time; look here, sir, it is your fault, my fingers are quite rough."

"Angel!" said Marius.

Angel is the only word in the language which cannot be worn out. No other word could resist the pitiless use which lovers make of it.

Then, as there were spectators, they broke off, and said not another word, contenting themselves with softly pressing each other's hands.

M. Gillenormand turned to all the rest in the room and cried:—

"Do talk louder, good people. Make a noise, behind the scenes there. Come, a little row, hang it all! so that these children may chatter at their ease."

And going up to Marius and Cosette, he whispered: "Go on. Don't stand on ceremony."

Aunt Gillenormand looked on in amazement at this irruption of light into her antiquated household. This amazement was not at all aggressive; it was not in the least like the scandalized and envious glance of an owl at two turtle-doves, — it was the stupid eye of a poor innocent fifty-seven years old; it was a ruined life gazing at that triumph, love.

"Mlle. Gillenormand the elder," said her father, "I told you that this would happen."

He was silent for a moment, then added:—

"Look at the happiness of others."

Then he turned to Cosette.

"How pretty she is! How pretty she is! She is a regular Greuze! So you are going to have all that to yourself, scamp? Ah, my boy, you have had a lucky escape from me; if I were fifteen years younger, we would fight with swords to see which of us should have her. There! I am in love with you myself, mademoiselle. That's very natural. It is your right. Oh, what a famous, charming little wedding we will have! St. Denis du St.-Sacrament

is our parish church; but I will get a dispensation, so that you may be married at St. Paul. It is a better church. It was built for the Jesuits. It is more coquettish. It is opposite Cardinal de Birague's fountain. The masterpiece of Jesuit architecture is at Namur. It is called St. Loup. You must go there when you are married. It is worth the journey. Mademoiselle, I am entirely of your opinion; I think girls ought to marry,— that is what they are made for. There is a certain Saint Catherine whom I should always like to see uncoifed.[1] To remain a maid is fine, but it is cold. Multiply, says the Bible. To save the people, a Joan of Arc is wanted; but to make a people, we want Mother Gigogne. So marry, my darlings. I really do not see the use of remaining a maid. Of course I know that they have a separate chapel in the church, and that they fall back on the Confraternity of the Virgin; but, dear me! a handsome young husband, an honest lad, and at the end of a year a bouncing baby, who sucks at you lustily, and who has fine rolls of fat on his thighs, and who clutches your bosom in handfuls with his pink paws, smiling like the rosy morn,— that's a good deal better, after all, than holding a candle at vespers and singing *Turris Eburnea*."

The grandfather pirouetted on his ninety-year-old heels, and began to talk again, like a spring which has been wound up:—

> "Thus, ceasing thy moody musings,
> Alcippe, 'tis true, that ere long, thou wilt wed."

"By the by!"

"What, father?"

"Had you not an intimate friend?"

"Yes; Courfeyrac."

"What has become of him?"

"He is dead."

[1] An allusion to a French idiom: *coiffer Sainte Catherine*,—"To remain unmarried."

"That is well."

He sat down by them, made Cosette take a seat, and took their four hands in his wrinkled old palms.

"What a dainty darling. This Cosette is a masterpiece! She is a very little girl and a very great lady. She will be only a baroness, and that is coming down in the world, for she was born to be a marchioness. What eyelashes she has! My children, get it well fixed in your noddles that you are on the right road. Love each other. Be foolish about it. Love is the folly of men and the wisdom of God. So adore each other,— only," he added, his face suddenly clouding, "what a pity! more than half that I possess is sunk in annuities. So long as I live, it will be all right; but when I am dead, twenty years hence, ah, my poor children, you will not have a sou. Your pretty white hands, Madame la Baronne, will do the devil the honour to pull him by the tail." [1]

Here a calm, grave voice was heard:—

"Mlle. Euphraise Fauchelevent has six hundred thousand francs."

It was Jean Valjean's voice.

He had not yet uttered a syllable; no one seemed to remember that he was present, and he stood motionless behind all those happy people.

"What has Mlle. Euphrasie to do with the question?" asked the startled grandfather.

"He means me," said Cosette.

"Six hundred thousand francs!" repeated M. Gillenormand.

"Less fourteen or fifteen thousand perhaps," said Jean Valjean.

And he laid on the table the parcel which Aunt Gillenormand had taken for a book.

Jean Valjean himself opened the packet; it was a bundle of bank-notes. They were turned over and counted. There

[1] *Tirer le diable par le queue,*—"To have a terribly hard time of it."

were five hundred bank-notes for a thousand francs each, and one hundred and sixty-eight for five hundred. In all, five hundred and eighty-four thousand francs.

"That's a famous book," said M. Gillenormand.

"Five hundred and eighty-four thousand francs!" murmured the aunt.

"That arranges a good many things, does it not, Mlle. Gillenormand the elder?" continued the grandfather. "That devil of a Marius has found a millionaire grisette upon the tree of dreams! Just trust to the love affairs of young people. Students find studentesses with six hundred thousand francs. Cherubino works better than Rothschild."

"Five hundred and eighty-four thousand francs!" repeated Mlle. Gillenormand. "Five hundred and eighty-four thousand francs! We may as well call it six hundred thousand, eh?"

As for Marius and Cosette, they were looking at each other. They hardly heeded this trifling circumstance.

CHAPTER V

BETTER PLACE YOUR MONEY IN A FOREST THAN WITH A NOTARY

OF course, our readers have understood, and no lengthy explanations will be required, that Jean Valjean, after the Champmathieu affair, was enabled, by his first escape for a few days, to come to Paris and withdraw, in season, from Lafitte's bank the sum he had earned under the name of M. Madeleine at Montreuil sur Mer; and that, fearing he might be recaptured, which actually happened shortly after, he buried and hid that sum in the forest of Montfermeil, in the place known as Blaru glade. The sum, six hundred and thirty thousand francs, all in bank-notes, occupied but

little space, and was contained in a box; but in order to protect the box from the damp, he placed it in an oak coffer filled with shavings of chestnut-wood. In the same coffer he placed his other treasure,— the bishop's candlesticks. It will be remembered that he carried off these candlesticks in his escape from Montreuil sur Mer. The man seen one evening for the first time by Boulatruelle was Jean Valjean. Afterward, whenever, Jean Valjean required money, he fetched it from the Blaru clearing,— hence the absences to which we have referred. He had a pick concealed somewhere in the heather, in a hiding-place known to himself alone. When he found Marius was convalescent, feeling that the hour was at hand when this money might prove useful, he went to fetch it; and it was again he whom Boulatruelle saw in the wood, but this time in the morning, and not at night. Boulatruelle inherited the pickaxe.

The real sum was five hundred and eighty-four thousand five hundred francs; Jean Valjean kept back the five hundred francs for himself. "We shall see later," he thought.

The difference between this sum and the six hundred and thirty thousand francs withdrawn from Lafitte, represented his expenditure for ten years, from 1823 to 1833. The five years' stay in the convent had only cost five thousand francs.

Jean Valjean put the two silver candlesticks on the mantelpiece, where they glistened, to the great admiration of Toussaint.

Moreover, Jean Valjean knew that he was set free from Javert. It had been stated in his presence, and he verified the fact in the "Moniteur," which had published it, that a police inspector named Javert had been found drowned under a washer-woman's boat between the Pont-au-Change and the Pont-Neuf and that a letter left by this man, hitherto considered blameless, and highly esteemed by his superiors, pointed to an attack of dementia and to suicide. "In truth," thought Jean Valjean, "since he let me go, when he had me in his power, he must have been mad even them."

CHAPTER VI

THE TWO OLD MEN, EACH IN HIS WAY, DO ALL THEY CAN TO MAKE COSETTE HAPPY

ALL preparations were made for the marriage. The physician, on being consulted, declared that it might take place in February. It was now December. A few ravishing weeks of perfect happiness slipped away.

The grandfather was by no means the least happy of them all. He sat for a whole quarter of an hour at a time contemplating Cosette.

"What wonderfully pretty girl!" he would exclaim, "and she looks so sweet and good! She is the most charming creature I have ever seen in my life. Pretty soon she'll be having virtues with a violet scent. She is one of the Graces, on my faith! A man could not help leading a noble life with such a creature. Marius, my lad, you are a baron, you are rich; don't go to pettifogging, I implore you."

Cosette and Marius had passed abruptly from the sepulchre into paradise. The transition had not been softened, and they would have been stunned if they had not been dazzled.

"Do you understand anything of all this?" Marius would say to Cosette.

"No," answered Cosette; "but it seems to me as if God were looking out for us."

Jean Valjean did everything, smoothed away every difficulty, reconciled everything, and rendered everything easy. He hastened toward Cosette's happiness with as much eagerness, and apparently with as much joy, as Cosette herself.

As he had been mayor, he knew how to solve a delicate problem, the secret of which he alone possessed,— the civil status of Cosette. To tell her origin openly might have

prevented the marriage; but he got Cosette out of all her difficulties. He arranged for her a family of dead people, — a sure way to incur no objections. Cosette was the only remaining member of an extinct family; Cosette was not his daughter, but the daughter of another Fauchelevent. Two brothers Fauchelevent had been gardeners at the convent of the Little Picpus. Inquiries were made there; the best testimonials and most satisfactory references were given, for the good nuns, little suited and little inclined to solve questions of paternity, and attaching no importance to the matter, had never known exactly of which of the two Fauchelevents Cosette was the daughter. They said what was wanted, and said it zealously. A notary's deed was drawn up, and Cosette became, in the eyes of the law, Mademoiselle Euphrasie Fauchelevent. She was declared an orphan both on the father's and mother's side. Jean Valjean so managed as to be appointed, under the name of Fauchelevent, as guardian of Cosette, with M. Gillenormand as surrogate guardian.

As for the five hundred and eighty-four thousand francs, they were a legacy left to Cosette by a dead person who wished to remain unknown. The original legacy had been five hundred and ninety-four thousand francs, but ten thousand had been spent in the education of Mademoiselle Euphrasie, five thousand of which had been paid to the convent. This legacy, deposited in the hands of a third party, was to be handed over to Cosette upon her majority, or at the period of her marriage. All this was highly acceptable, as we see, especially when backed up by more than half a million francs. There were certainly a few singular points here and there, but they were not noticed; one of the persons interested had his eyes blindfolded by love, and the others by the six hundred thousand francs.

Cosette learned that she was not the daughter of the old man whom she had so long called father. He was only a relative; another Fauchelevent was her real father. At any other moment this would have broken her heart; but at the ineffable hour she had now reached it was only a slight

shadow, a passing cloud, and she had so much joy that this cloud did not last long. She had Marius. The young man came, the old man disappeared,— such is life.

And then, Cosette had for many long years been accustomed to see enigmas around her. Every being who has had a mysterious childhood is ever ready for certain renunciations.

Still, she continued to call Jean Valjean "father."

Cosette, who was in paradise, was enthusiastic over Father Gillenormand. To be sure, he overwhelmed her with compliments and presents. While Jean Valjean was constructing for Cosette a normal position in society and an unimpeachable status, M. Gillenormand looked after the wedding outfit. Nothing amused him so much as to be magnificent. He had given Cosette a gown of Binche guipure, which he inherited from his own grandmother. "These fashions spring up again," said he; "antiquities are all the rage, and the young women of my old days dress like the old ladies of my youth."

He plundered his respectable round-bellied chests of drawers, made of Coromandel lacquer, which had not been opened for years. "Let us shrive these dowagers," he said, "and see what they have in their corporation." He noisily violated pot-bellied drawers, full of the dresses of all his wives, all his mistresses, and all his female ancestry. He lavished on Cosette, Chinese satins, damasks, brocades, flowered moires, rich gros-grain silks, India handkerchiefs embroidered with gold that could be washed, Genoa and Alençon point-lace, sets of old jewelry, ivory bonbon boxes adorned with microscopic battles, gewgaws, and ribbons. Cosette, astounded, head over heels in love with Marius and wild with gratitude to M. Gillenormand, dreamed of an unbounded happiness, clothed in satin and velvet. Her wedding outfit seemed to her to be borne by seraphim. Her soul floated in azure depths, on wings of Mechlin lace.

The intoxication of the lovers was only equalled, as we said, by the ecstasy of the grandfather. There was some-

thing like a flourish of trumpets in the Rue des Filles du Calvaire.

Each morning there was a fresh offering of *bric-à-brac* from the grandfather to Cosette. All sorts of finery was spread splendidly before her.

One day, Marius, who was fond of talking seriously amid his happiness, said, with reference to some incident which I have forgotten:—

"The men of the Revolution are so great that they already possess the prestige of centuries, like Cato and like Phocion, and each one of them seems an antique memory."

"'Moire antique!" exclaimed the old gentleman. "Thank you, Marius, that is the very idea for which I was seeking."

And on the morrow, a splendid tea-coloured moire antique dress was added to Cosette's outfit.

The grandfather extracted wisdom from these fripperies:—

"Love is all very well; but there must be something else to go with it. There must be something useless in happiness. Happiness is only what is necessary. But season it, say I, with a vast amount of superfluity. A palace and her heart. Her heart and the Louvre. Her heart and the fountains of Versailles. Give me my shepherdess, and take care that she be a duchess. Bring me Phillis crowned with corn-flowers, and add one hundred thousand francs a year. Open for me an endless Bucolic under a marble colonnade. I consent to the Bucolic, and also to the fairy spectacle of marble and gold. Dry happiness is like dry bread,— you eat, but you do not dine. I wish for superfluity, for the useless, the extravagant, that which serves no earthly use. I remember seeing, in Strasburg Cathedral, a clock as tall as a three-story house, which marked the hour, which had the kindness to mark the hour, but did not look as if it were made for that purpose; and which, besides striking midday or midnight,— midday, the hour of the sun, and midnight, the hour of love,— or any other hour you please,— gave you the

moon and the stars, earth and sea, birds and fishes, Phœbus and Phœbe, and a host of things that came out of a niche, and the twelve apostles, and the Emperor Charles V., and Eponina, and Sabinus, and a lot of little gilt men, who played the trumpet, into the bargain, not to mention the enchanting chimes which it scattered on the air on every possible occasion, without your knowing why. Is a wretched, naked clock which only marks the hours, worth all that? I am of the opinion of the great clock of Strasburg, and I prefer it to the Black Forest cuckoo clock."

M. Gillenormand talked all sorts of nonsense about the marriage; and all the ideas of the eighteenth century passed pell-mell into his dithyrambs.

"You are ignorant of the art of festivals. You do not know how to get up a day's pleasure in these times," he exclaimed. "Your nineteenth century is soft. It lacks excess. It ignores the rich, it ignores the noble. In everything it is close-shorn. Your third estate is insipid; it has no colour, no smell, no shape. The dream of your tradesmen who establish themselves, as they call it, is a pretty boudoir freshly decorated with rosewood and chintz. Make way there! the Sieur Curmudgeon marries the Demoiselle Clutchpenny. Sumptuousness and splendour. A louis d'or is stuck to a wax candle. Such is the age. I insist on fleeing from it beyond the Sarmatians. Ah, so far back as 1787 I predicted that all was lost on the day when I saw the Duke de Rohan, Prince de Léon, Duke de Chabot, Duke de Montbazon, Marquis de Soubise, Viscount de Thouars, and Peer of France, go to Longchamps in a spanker;[1] that has borne its fruits. In this century, men do business, gamble on the Stock Exchange, win money, and are mean. They take care of and varnish their surface; they are carefully dressed, washed, soaped, shaved, combed, rubbed, brushed, and cleaned on the outside; irreproachable; as polished as a pebble, discreet, neat, and trim, and at the same time, death

[1] Springless carriage.

of my life! they have in the depths of their conscience dung-heaps and cesspools which would make a milkmaid who blows her nose with her fingers shrink. I grant the present age this motto, 'Dirty propriety.' Marius, do not be annoyed; give me leave to speak; I say no harm of the people, as you see. I'm always talking of your people, but do let me give the tradespeople a slap. I'm one of them. He who loves lays on the lash. I tell you plainly people marry nowadays, but they no longer know how to marry.

"Ah, it is true, I regret the grace of ancient manners; I regret everything about them,— that elegance, that chivalry, those courteous and dainty ways, that joyous luxury which every one possessed, music forming part of the wedding, symphony above stairs and tabors below, the joyful faces round the table, the highflown compliments, the songs, the fireworks, the hearty laugh, the devil and his train, and the big knots of ribbon. I regret the bride's garter. It is first cousin to the girdle of Venus. On what does the siege of Tory turn? On Helen's garter, to be sure. Why did they fight? Why did Diomedes the divine break over the head of Meriones that great brazen helmet with its ten points? Why did Achilles and Hector tickle each other with lances? Because Helen let Paris take her garter. With Cosette's garter, Homer would write the Iliad. He would put an old chatterer like me in his poem, and call him Nestor. My friends, in former times, in those good old times, people married wisely; they made a good contract, and then they had a good lay-out. So soon as Cujas had gone out Gamacho came in. Hang it all! the stomach is an agreeable beast that demands its due, and wants to have its wedding too. We supped well, and had at table a pretty neighbour without a neckerchief, who only half hid her throat. Oh, the wide laughing mouths; and how gay we were in those days! Youth was a bouquet; every young man was a branch of lilac or a posy of roses. If he were a warrior, he was still a shepherd; and if, by chance, he were a captain of dragoons, he managed to call himself Florian. All were anxious to

look well. They wore embroidery and rouge. A tradesman looked like a flower, a marquis like a precious stone. They did not wear straps; they did not wear boots. They were spruce, shining, lustrous, airy, dainty, and coquettish, but it did not prevent their wearing a sword at their side; the humming-bird has beak and claws. It was the time of the 'gallant Indies.' One side of that age was delicate, the other magnificent; and, by jingo! people amused themselves. Nowadays folks are serious. Tradesmen are miserly, their wives are prudish; your age is out of joint. The Graces would be expelled because their dresses were cut too low in the neck! Alas! beauty is concealed as if it were ugliness. Since the Revolution all wear trousers, even the ballet-girls. A ballet-girl must be serious; your rigadoons are doctrinarian. A man must be majestic. He would feel very much annoyed if his chin were not held in his cravat. The ideal of every scamp of twenty when he marries is to resemble Royer-Collard. And do you know what people arrive at by this majesty? At being petty. Learn this: joy is not merely joyous; it is great. Be in love gayly, then, hang it all! marry, when you do marry, with fever and giddiness and noise and an uproar of happiness. Be grave in church, if you will; but so soon as the Mass is over,— the devil! you should make a dream whirl round the bride. A marriage should be royal and chimerical; it should exhibit its ceremony from the cathedral of Rheims to the Pagoda of Chanteloup. I have a horror of a scrubby wedding. Confound it! be in Olympus for that one day at least; be gods. Ah, people might be sylphs and water-nymphs, and revel in games and laughter; but they are scrubs. My friends, every newly-married man should be Prince Aldobrandini. Take advantage of this unique moment of life to soar into the empyrean with the swans and the eagles, even if you do fall back to-morrow into the commonplaceness of frogs. Do not economize on the hymeneal rites; do not prune them of their splendour, nor split farthings on the day when you are radiant. A wedding is not house-keeping. Oh, if I had my

way, it should be a gallant affair,— violins should be heard under the trees. Here is my programme: sky-blue and silver. I would mingle rustic divinities with the feast; I would convene the Dryads and the Nereids. The wedding of Amphitrite, a pink cloud, nymphs with their hair carefully dressed and quite naked, an Academician offering quatrains to the goddess, a car drawn by marine monsters.

'Triton trotted on before and drew from his conch shell
Such ravishing sounds, that all sank ravished 'neath his magic spell.'

There is a programme for a feast; there's a good one, or I'm no judge, egad!"

While the grandfather, in the heat of his lyric effusion, was listening to himself, Cosette and Marius grew intoxicated by gazing freely at each other.

Aunt Gillenormand regarded all this with her imperturbable placidity. She had, during the last five or six months, experienced a certain amount of emotions. Marius returned, Marius brought back bleeding, Marius brought back from a barricade, Marius dead, Marius living, Marius reconciled, Marius affianced, Marius marrying a poor girl, Marius marrying a millionaire. The six hundred thousand francs had been her last surprise. Then the indifference of a girl taking her first communion returned to her. She went regularly to Mass, told her beads, read her prayer-book, murmured her *Aves* in one corner of the house, while *I love you* was murmured in another, and saw Marius and Cosette vaguely, like two shadows. The shadow was herself.

There is a certain state of inert asceticism in which the mind, neutralized by torpor, and a stranger to what might be called the business of living, receives no human impressions, either pleasant or painful, with the exception of earthquakes and catastrophes. "This devotion," Father Gillenormand would say to his daughter, "is like a cold in the head. You smell nothing of life. Not a bad odour, but no good one either."

However, the six hundred thousand francs had settled the old maid's indecision. Her father was so little accustomed to take her into account that he had not consulted her in the matter of consent to Marius's marriage. He had acted impetuously, according to his wont, having, like all despots become slaves, but one thought,— to please Marius. As for the aunt, he had scarcely remembered that the aunt existed, and that she might have an opinion of her own; and, sheep though she was, this had offended her. Somewhat angry inwardly, but outwardly unmoved, she said to herself, "My father has settled the marriage question without reference to me. I will settle the question of the inheritance without consulting him." She was rich, in fact, and her father was not. It is probable that if the match had been a poor one, she would have left it poor. "So much the worse for my nephew! If he choose to marry a beggar, he may be a beggar too." But Cosette's half million francs pleased the aunt, and changed her feelings with respect to the loving couple. Some consideration is due to six hundred thousand francs, and it was evident that she could not do otherwise than leave her fortune to these young people, since they no longer required it.

It was arranged that the couple should live with M. Gillenormand. The grandfather insisted on giving up to them his own bedroom,— the finest room in the house. "It will make me young again," he declared. "It is an old plan of mine. I always had an idea of having a wedding in my room."

He furnished this room with a quantity of antique trifles.

He had hung it with an extraordinary stuff, which he had in the piece, and believed came from Utrecht,— a gold satin ground with velvet auriculas. "It was with that stuff," he said, "that the bed of the Duchess d'Anville, at La Rochefoucauld, was hung." He placed on the mantelpiece a little figure in Saxony porcelain holding a muff against its naked stomach.

M. Gillenormand's library became the office which Marius required; for an office, it will be borne in mind, is a necessity for every member of the bar.

CHAPTER VII

THE EFFECTS OF DREAMS MINGLED WITH HAPPINESS

THE lovers met daily. Cosette came with M. Fauchelevent. "It is turning things topsy-turvy," said Mlle, Gillenormand, "for the bride to come to the house to be courted like this." But Marius's convalescence had led to the habit at first, and the easy chairs of the Rue des Filles du Calvaire, more convenient for a *tête-à-tête* than the straw-bottomed chairs of the Rue de l'Homme Armé, had decided it. Marius and M. Fauchelevent saw each other, but did not speak. It seemed as though this had been agreed on. Every girl needs a chaperon. Cosette could not have come without M. Fauchelevent. To Marius, M. Fauchelevent was the condition of Cosette's presence. He accepted him. By discussing vaguely, and without any precision, political matters, from the point of view of universal improvement, they at last came to say a little more than Yes and No. Once, on the subject of education, which Marius wished to have free and obligatory, multiplied in every form, lavished upon all like light and air, and, in a word, respirable by the entire people, they were agreed, and they almost conversed. Marius remarked on this occasion that M. Fauchelevent spoke well, and even with a certain elevation of language. Still, something was wanting. M. Fauchelevent had something less than a man of the world, and something more. Marius, in his innermost thoughts, surrounded with all sorts of mute questions this M. Fauchelevent, who was to him simply kind and cold. Sometimes, doubts as to his own recollections oc-

curred to him. There was a gap in his memory,— a black spot, an abyss dug by four months of agony. Many things were lost therein. He began to ask himself whether it was really true that he had seen M. Fauchelevent, a man so serious and so calm, at the barricade.

This was however not the sole surprise which the appearances and disappearances of the past had left in his mind. We must not suppose that he was delivered from all those promptings of memory which compel us, even when happy and content, to take a melancholy backward glance. The head which does not turn back to vanished horizons contains neither thought nor love. At moments, Marius buried his face in his hands, and the vague and tumultuous past traversed the twilight which held possession of his brain. Again he saw Mabœuf fall, he heard Gavroche singing under the grape-shot, and he felt beneath his lips the icy chill of Eponine's brow; Enjolras, Courfeyrac, Jean Prouvaire, Combeferre, Bossuet, Grantaire,— all his friends rose before him, and then disappeared. Were all these dear, dolorous, valiant, charming, or tragic beings merely dreams? Had they actually existed? The riot had wrapped everything in its smoke. These great fevers have great dreams. He questioned himself; he felt himself; all these vanished realities made him dizzy. Where were they all, then? Was it really true that all were dead? A fall into the darkness had carried away everything, except himself. All seemed to have disappeared, as if behind the curtain of a theatre. There are such curtains which drop in our life; God passes on to the next act. And he himself, was he really the same man? He, the poor man, was rich; he, the abandoned man, had a family; he, the desperate man, was about to marry Cosette. It seemed to him that he had passed through a tomb, and that he had gone in black and come out white; and in that tomb the others had remained. At certain moments all these beings of the past, returned and present, formed a circle around him, and overshadowed him; then he thought of Cosette, and became serene once more; but nothing

less than this felicity was required to efface that catastrophe.

M. Fauchelevent almost had a place among those vanished beings. Marius hesitated to believe that the Fauchelevent of the barricade was the same as this Fauchelevent in flesh and blood, so gravely seated beside Cosette. The first was, probably, one of those nightmares brought to him, and borne away by his hours of delirium. However, as their two natures were widely sundered, it was impossible for Marius to question M. Fauchelevent. The idea had not even occurred to him. We have already indicated this characteristic detail.

Two men who have a common secret, and who by a sort of tacit agreement never exchange a syllable on the subject, are not so rare as may be supposed.

Once, only, Marius made an effort. He turned the conversation on the Rue de la Chanvrerie, and, turning to M. Fauchelevent, he said:—

"Do you know that street well?"

"What street?"

"The Rue de la Chanvrerie."

"I never heard the name of that street," said M. Fauchelevent, in the most natural tone in the world.

The answer, which referred to the name of the street, and not to the street itself, seemed to Marius more conclusive than it really was.

"Decidedly," thought he, "I must have been dreaming. I had an hallucination. It was some one that resembled him. M. Fauchelevent was not there."

CHAPTER VIII

TWO MEN IMPOSSIBLE TO DISCOVER

HIS rapture, great though it was, did not drive all other thoughts from Marius's mind.

While the marriage was in preparation, and while he awaited the appointed day, he made some difficult and scrupulous retrospective researches.

He owed gratitude in several quarters; he owed it for his father, and he owed it for himself.

There was Thénardier, and there was the stranger who had brought him, Marius, back to M. Gillenormand's house.

Marius was anxious to find these two men, as he did not wish to marry, be happy, and forget them, and feared lest these unpaid debts of honour might cast a shadow over his life, which would henceforth be so bright.

It was impossible for him to leave all these arrears of suffering behind him; and he wished, before he entered joyously into the future, to obtain a receipt from the past.

That Thénardier was a villain took nothing from the fact that he had saved Colonel Pontmercy. Thénardier was a scoundrel in the eyes of everybody except Marius.

And Marius, ignorant of the real scene on the battlefield of Waterloo, did not know this peculiar fact, that his father stood to Thénardier in the strange position of owing him life without owing him gratitude.

Not one of the various agents whom Marius employed succeeded in finding any trace of Thénardier. He seemed to have completely vanished. Mother Thénardier had died in prison before the trial. Thénardier and his daughter Azelma, the only two left of that lamentable group, had again plunged into the shadow. The gulf of the social unknown had silently closed above them. There could no longer

be seen on the surface even that quiver, that tremor, and those obscure concentric circles which announce that something has fallen in, and that a grappling-iron may be used.

Mother Thénardier being dead, Boulatruelle being discharged, Claquesous having disappeared, and the principal persons accused having escaped from prison, the trial of the affair for the Gorbeau House had pretty nearly failed.

The affair had remained rather dark. The assize court was compelled to satisfy itself with two subordinates, Panchaud, *alias* Printanier, *alias* Bigrenaille, and Demi-Liard, *alias* Deux Milliards, who were inconsistently condemned to fourteen years at the galleys. Penal servitude for life was the sentence passed against their accomplices who escaped.

Thénardier, the chief and ring-leader was condemned to death, also in default.

This sentence was the only thing that remained of Thénardier, casting on that buried name its lurid light, like a candle beside a bier.

Moreover, this sentence, by thrusting Thénardier back into the lowest depths, through the fear of being recaptured, added to the dense gloom which covered this man.

As for the other,— the unknown man who had saved Marius,— the researches had at first some result, then stopped short. They succeeded in finding the hackney coach which brought Marius to the Rue des Filles du Calvaire on the night of June 6.

The driver declared that, on the 6th of June, by the order of a police officer, he had stood from three o'clock in the afternoon till night-fall on the quay of the Champs Elysées, above the opening of the Great Sewer; that, at about nine in the evening, the gate of the sewer which opens upon the river bank opened; that a man came out, bearing on his shoulders another man, who appeared to be dead; that the policeman, who was watching at that point had arrested the living man, and seized the dead man; that by order of the

police, he, the coachman, had taken "all those people" into his carriage; that they drove first to the Rue des Filles du Calvaire, and deposited the dead man there; that the dead man was M. Marius, and that he, the coachman, recognized him perfectly, though he was alive "this time;" that afterward they got into his coach again; that he had whipped up his horses; that a few yards from the gate of the Archives they shouted to him to stop; that he was paid there, in the street, and discharged, and the policeman took away the other man; that he knew nothing more; and that the night was very dark.

Marius, as we said, remembered nothing. He merely remembered that he had been seized from behind by a strong hand at the moment when he fell backward in the barricade; then everything vanished from his memory.

He had only regained his senses when he was at M. Gillenormand's.

He lost himself in conjectures.

He could not doubt his own identity. But how was it that he, who had fallen in the Rue de la Chanvrerie, had been picked up by the police officer on the bank of the Seine, near the Pont des Invalides?

Some one had carried him from the quarter of the Markets to the Champs Elysées. And how? Through the sewer. Extraordinary devotion!

Some one? Who?

It was this man who Marius sought.

Of this man, who was his saviour, he could find nothing, — not a trace, not the slightest sign.

Marius, though compelled to exercise great reserve, pushed his inquiries as far as the prefecture of police, but there the information which he obtained led to no better result than elsewhere.

The prefecture knew less about the matter than the driver of the hackney coach. They had no knowledge of any arrest having taken place at the outlet of the Great Sewer on June 6.

They had received no report from any officer about this matter, which, at the prefecture, was regarded as a fable. The invention of this fable was attributed to the driver.

A driver anxious for drink money is capable of anything, — even of imagination. The fact, however, was certain, and Marius could not doubt it, unless he doubted his own identity, as we have just said.

Everything about this strange enigma was inexplicable.

That man, that mysterious man, whom the driver had seen emerge from the grating of the Great Sewer, bearing the fainting Marius on his back, and whom the police officer had arrested in the very act of saving an insurgent,— what had become of him? What had become of the officer himself.

Why had he kept silence? Had the man succeeded in making his escape? Had he bribed the officer? Why did this man give no sign of life to Marius, who owed everything to him? His disinterestedness was no less wonderful than his devotion. Why had not this man re-appeared? Perhaps he was above reward, but no man is above gratitude. Was he dead? Who was the man? What did he look like? No one could tell.

The driver replied, " The night was very dark." Basque and Nicolette, in their sudden alarm, had only looked at their young master, who was covered with blood.

The porter, whose candle had lit up Marius's tragic arrival, had alone remarked the man in question, and this was the description he gave of him: " The man was frightful."

In the hope that it might throw some light on his researches, Marius kept the blood-stained clothes which he wore when he was brought to his grandfather's.

On examining the coat, it was found that the skirt was strangely torn. A piece was wanting.

One evening, Marius was speaking in the presence of Cosette and Jean Valjean of all this singular adventure, of the countless inquiries he had made, and the fruitfulness of his efforts. Monsieur Fauchelevent's cold face offended him.

He exclaimed with a vivacity which had almost the ring of anger: —

"Yes, that man, whoever he may be, was sublime! Do you know what he did sir? He intervened like an archangel. He must have thrown himself into the thick of the battle, and have carried me away, have opened the sewer, have dragged me into it, and carried me through it. He must have travelled more than a league and a half through frightful subterranean galleries, bent over and weighed down.,— in the darkness, in the sewer, more than a league and a half, sir, with a corpse on his back! And to what end? For the sole obect of saving that corpse. And that corpse was myself. He said to himself: 'Perhaps there is still a gleam of life; I will risk my own existence for that wretched spark!' and he risked his existence not once, but twenty times! and every step was a danger. The proof is, that on leaving the sewer, he was arrested. Do you know, sir, that that man did all this, and he had no reward to expect? Who was I? An insurgent. What was I? A conquered man. Oh, if Cosette's six hundred thousand francs were mine —"

"They are yours," interrupted Jean Valjean.

"Well, then," continued Marius, "I would give them to find that man."

Jean Valjean was silent.

BOOK VI

THE SLEEPLESS NIGHT

CHAPTER I

FEBRUARY 16, 1833.

THE night of February 16 was a blessed night. Above its shadows was the open sky. It was the wedding-night of Marius and Cosette.

The day had been adorable.

It was not the grand feast dreamed of by the grandfather, — a fairy scene, with a confusion of cherubim and cupids above the heads of the bridal couple, a marriage worthy of being painted over a door,— but it was sweet and smiling.

The fashion of marriage in 1833 was not at all what it is now. France had not yet borrowed from England that supreme delicacy of carrying off one's wife, of fleeing on leaving the church, of hiding one's self as if ashamed of one's happiness, and of combining the manœuvres of a bankrupt with the raptures of the Song of Songs. We had not yet grasped to the full how chaste, how exquisite and how decent it is to jolt our paradise in a post-chaise, to intersperse the mystery with the crack of the whip; to take an inn bed for nuptial couch, and to leave behind in a commonplace chamber, at so much per night, the most sacred recollection of life, pell-mell with the interviews of the driver of the coach and the maid of the inn.

In this second half of the nineteenth century, the mayor

and his scarf, the priest and his chasuble, the law and God, are no longer sufficient; they must be eked out by the postilion of Longjumeau, blue jacket with red facings and bell buttons, a leathern badge, buckskin breeches, oaths to the Norman horses with their knotted tails, imitation lace, oilskin hat, long powdered locks, an enormous whip, and high boots. France does not yet carry elegance to such a length as to shower on the post-chaise, as the English nobility do, worn-out shoes and trodden down slippers in memory of Churchill, afterward Marborough or Malbrouck, who was assailed on his wedding-day by the anger of an aunt, which brought him good luck. Shoes and slippers do not yet form part of our nuptial celebrations; but patience, with the spread of good taste we shall yet come to it.

In 1733,— that is to say, one hundred years ago,— marriage was not performed at a smart trot.

Whimsically enough, people still imagined at that epoch that a marriage was a private and social festival; that a patriarchal banquet did not spoil a domestic solemnity; that gayety, even, even if excessive, so long as it was decent, did happiness no harm; and that, in short, it was a good and admirable thing that the fusion of those two destinies from which a family was fated to spring should begin at home, and that the household should in future have its nuptial chamber as a witness.

And people were so immodest as to marry in their own home.

The wedding took place, then, according to this new superannuated fashion, at M. Gillenormand's house.

Natural and simple as this matter of marrying is, the publication of the bans, drawing up the deeds, the mayoralty, and the church always cause some complication. Things could not be got ready before February 16.

Now — we note this detail for the pure satisfaction of being exact — it happened that the 16th was Shrove Tuesday. There were hesitations and scruples, especially on the part of Aunt Gillenormand.

"Shrove Tuesday!" exclaimed the grandfather; "so much the better. There is a proverb that,—

'Shrove Tuesday weddings are the ones
That never have ungrateful sons.'

All right. Here goes for the 16th. Do you want to put it off, Marius?"

"Certainly not," said the lover.

"Then let's be married," said the grandfather.

The marriage, therefore, took place on the 16th, in spite of the public holiday. It rained that day; but there is always a little blue patch in the sky at the service of happiness, which lovers see, even when the rest of creation is under an umbrella.

On the previous day Jean Valjean handed over to Marius, in the presence of M. Gillenormand, the five hundred and eighty-four thousand francs.

As the property was to be held in common the deeds were very simple.

Toussaint would henceforth be of no use to Jean Valjean; Cosette inherited her, and promoted her to the rank of lady's-maid.

As for Jean Valjean, a nice room was furnished expressly for him at M. Gillenormand's, and Cosette said to him so irresistibly: "Father, I implore you," that she almost made him promise that he would come and occupy it.

A few days before that fixed for the marriage, an accident happened to Jean Valjean,— he slightly injured the thumb of his right hand. It was not serious, and he had not allowed any one to poultice it, or even to look at it,— not even Cosette. Still, it compelled him to wrap his hand in a bandage and wear his arm in a sling, and this of course prevented him from signing anything. M. Gillenormand, as surrogate guardian to Cosette, took his place.

We will not take the reader either to the mayor's office or the church. Two lovers are not usually followed so far, and

we are wont to turn our back on the drama so soon as it puts a wedding-favour in its button-hole. We will content ourselves with noting an incident which, though unnoticed by the bridal party, marked the drive from the Rue des Filles du Calvaire to St. Paul's church.

The Rue St. Louis was being repaired at the time and it was blocked from the Rue du Parc Royal. Thus, it was impossible for the carriage to go direct to St. Paul's. As they were obliged to change their course, the simplest way was to turn into the boulevard. One of the guests observed that as it was Shrove Tuesday, there would be a crowd of vehicles. "Why so?" asked M. Gillenormand. "On account of the masks." "Capital!" said the grandfather; "we will go that way. These young people are going to be married. They are about to see the serious side of life. A bit of masquerade will be a good preparation for it."

They turned into the boulevard. The first of the wedding-coaches contained Cosette and Aunt Gillenormand, M. Gillenormand and Jean Valjean. Marius, still separated from his bride according to custom, was in the second. The nuptial procession, on turning out of the Rue des Filles du Calvaire, became entangled in a long file of vehicles reaching from the Madeleine to the Bastille, and from the Bastille to the Madeleine. Masks abounded on the boulevard. Though it rained every now and then, Harlequin, Pantaloon, and Clown persisted. In the good humour of that winter of 1833, Paris disguised itself as Venice. We do not see such Shrove Tuesdays nowadays. As everything existing is a widespread Carnival, there is no Carnival left.

The sidewalks were thronged with pedestrians, and the windows with curious gazers. The terraces crowning the peristyles of the theatres were lined with spectators. In addition to the masks, they watched the procession (peculiar to Shrove Tuesday as to Longchamp) of vehicles of every description,— furniture vans, curricles, cabs, carts, marching in order, rigorously riveted to each other by police regulations, and, as it were. running on rails. Any one who happens to

be in one of these vehicles is at once spectator and spectacle. Policemen standing at each side of the boulevard kept in place these two interminable parallel lines, moving in contrary directions, and watched that nothing should interfere with that double current, one flowing up stream, the other down,— one toward the Chausée d'Antin, the other toward the Faubourg St. Antoine. The escutcheoned carriages of Peers of France and Ambassadors held the middle of the road, coming and going freely. Certain magnificent and joyous processions — notably that of the fat ox — had the same privilege. In this Parisian gayety, England cracked his whip; for the post-chaise of Lord Seymour, at which a popular nickname was hurled, passed by with a great noise.

In the double file, along which Municipal Guards galloped like sheep-dogs, honest family arks, crowded with great-aunts and grandmothers, displayed at their windows, healthy groups of children in disguise, clowns of seven, and Columbines of six,— ravishing little creatures, feeling that they formed an official part of the public merriment, imbued with the dignity of their harlequinade, and displaying the gravity of functionaries.

From time to time a block occurred somewhere in the procession of vehicles; one or other of the two side files stopped until the knot was untied (one vehicle delayed was enough to paralyze the entire line), then they started again.

The wedding-carriages were in the file going toward the Bastille on the right-hand side of the boulevard. Opposite the Rue du Pont-aux-Choux there was a stoppage. Almost at the same moment the file on the other side, proceeding toward the Madeleine, stopped too. At this point in the procession there was a carriage-load of masks.

These carriages, or, to speak more correctly, these cart-loads of masks, are a familiar sight to Parisians. If they failed on a Shrove Tuesday or at mid-lent, it would be taken in bad part; and people would say: "There's something behind it. Probably we are going to have a change of ministry." A heap of Cassandras, Harlequins and Columbines jolted by

high above the heads of the passers; all sorts of grotesques, from the Turk to the savage; Hercules supporting a marchioness; fish-fags who would make Rabelais stop his ears, as well as Mænads who would make Aristophanes blush; tow perukes, pink fleshings, swell hats, pantaloons, spectacles, shouts directed to pedestrians, arms akimbo, bold postures, naked shoulders, masked faces, and immodesty unmuzzled; a chaos of effronteries driven by a coachman crowned with flowers,—such was this institution.

Greece felt the want of Thespis's cart, and France needs Vadé's cab.

All may be parodied, even parody. The Saturnalia, that grimace of antique beauty, ends by exaggeration upon exaggeration with Shrove Tuesday; and the Bacchanal, formerly crowned with vine-leaves, bathed in sunshine, and displaying her marble breasts in a divine semi-nudity, which is now flabby under the drenched rags of the north, has at last come to be known as Jack-Pudding.

The tradition of coach-loads of masks dates back to the oldest times of the monarchy. The accounts of Louis XI. allow the palace steward "twenty sous Fournois for three coaches of mascarades at the cross-roads." In our day, these noisy loads of creatures generally ride in some old fly of which they encumber the roof, or overwhelm with their tumultuous group a hired landau with the hood thrown back. There are twenty where there is only room for six. They cling to the seat, to the rumble, to the hood, to the pole, and they even straddle across the lamps. They stand, sit, lie, cross-legged, or with hanging legs. The women occupy the knees of the men, and their wild pyramid is seen for a long distance over the heads of the crowd. These vehicles form mountains of merriment in the midst of the mob. Collé, Panard, and Piron flow from them, enriched with slang. The fish-fag's catechism is expectorated from above upon the people. This cab, which has grown colossal through its burden, has an air of conquest. Uproar sits in front and confusion worse confounded rides behind. People shout, sing, yell, and writhe

with happiness in it; gayety roars; sarcasm flashes; joviality is flaunted like a red flag; two nags drag farce expanded into an apotheosis! it is the triumphal car of Laughter,— a laughter too cynical to be frank. In truth, this laughter is suspicious. Its mission is to prove to the Parisians the existence of Carnival.

These fish-fag vehicles, in which some strange darkness is perceptible, cause the philosopher to reflect. There is something of the government in them. You lay your finger there on a curious affinity between public men and public women.

It is certainly a sorry thought that heaped-up turpitudes should give a sum total of gayety; that people should be amused by piling ignominy upon opprobrium; that espionage, acting as a caryatid to prostitution, should amuse the mob at the same time that it affronts it; that the crowd should love to see this monstrous living pile of spangled rags, half ordure, half light, roll by on four wheels barking and singing; that they should clap their hands at this glory compounded of all shame; and that no festival should be possible for the people unless the police parade in the midst of these twenty-headed hydras of joy. Most sad this certainly is. But what is to be done about it? These tumbrels of beribboned and beflowered slime are insulted and forgiven by the laughter of the public. The laughter of all is the accomplice of universal degradation. Certain unhealthy festivals disintegrate the people and convert them into the populace; and populaces, like tyrants, require buffoons. The king has his jester, and the populace its Merry-Andrew. Paris is a great, mad city, whenever it is not a great, sublime city. The carnival there is political. Paris, let us confess it, willingly allows infamy to furnish it with a comedy. She only asks of her masters — when she has masters — one thing: "Paint the mud for me." Rome was of the same humour. She loved Nero; and Nero was a Titantic longshoreman.[1]

Accident ordained, as we have just said, that one of these

[1] A favourite character for fancy balls.

shapeless groups of masked men and women lugged about in a vast barouche, should halt on the left of the boulevard, while the wedding-party halted on the right. The carriage-load of masks caught sight, across the road, of the carriage in which was the bride.

"Hullo!" said a mask, "a wedding."

"A mock wedding," retorted another; "we are the genuine article."

And, as they were too far off to address the wedding-party, and as they also feared the interference of the police, the two masks looked elsewhere.

The whole carriage-load had plenty of work a moment after, for the mob began to hoot at them, which is the crowd's caress to masquerades; and the two masks who had just spoken were obliged to face the mob with their comrades, and found the whole stock of projectiles from the arsenal of the fish-markets scarcely sufficient to reply to the enormous yells from the popular throat. A frightful exchange of metaphors took place between the masks and the crowd.

Meantime, two other masks in the same carriage,— a Spaniard with an exaggerated nose, an elderly air, and enormous black mustaches, and a thin and very youthful fish-wife, wearing a half mask,— had also noticed the wedding, and while their companions and the spectators were insulting each other, held a conversation in a low voice.

Their aside was covered by the tumult, and was lost in it. Showers of rain had drenched the open carriage. The winds of February are not warm; as the fish-wife answered the Spaniard, she shivered, laughed, and coughed.

This was the dialogue: —

"Look here."

"What is it, dad?"

"Do you see that old cove?"

"What old cove?"

"There in the first go-cart, in the wedding-party, on the side next us."

"With his arm in a sling?"

"Yes."

"Well?"

"I'm sure I know him."

"Ah!"

"May my scrag be cut, and I never have said 'you,' 'thou,' or 'I' in my life if I do not twig that bloke."

"To-day Paris is Pantin."[1]

"Can you see the bride if you stoop down?"

"No."

"And the bridegroom?"

"There is no bridegroom in that trap."

"Nonsense!"

"Unless it be that other old cove."

"Come, try to get a look at the bride by stooping very low."

"I can't."

"No matter; I know that old bloke with the lame paw, that's dead sure."

"And what good will it do you, your knowing him?"

"I don't know. You never can tell!"

"I don't care a hang for any old bloke, I don't."

"I know him."

"Know him as much as you like."

"How the deuce does he come to be at the wedding?"

"Why, we are there too."

"Where does the wedding come from?"

"How do I know?"

"Listen."

"Well, what is it?"

"You must do something."

"What is it?"

"Get out of our trap and nose that wedding."

"What for?"

"To find out where it goes, and what it is. Hurry up! jump down; leg it, my girl, for you are young."

[1] Slang term for Paris.

"I can't leave the carriage."

"Why not?"

"I am hired."

"Oh, the devil!"

"I owe the prefecture a full day's work."

"That's true."

"If I leave the carriage, the first policeman who sees me will arrest me. You know that well enough."

"Yes, I know."

"I am bought by the High Cockalorums [the government], for the day."

"No matter. That old fellow bothers me."

"Old men bother you! Yet you are no spring chicken."

"He is in the first carriage."

"Well?"

"In the bride's trap."

"What of it?"

"So he is the father."

"What do I care?"

"I tell you he is the father."

"He's not the only father."

"Listen."

"Well, what?"

"I can't go out unless I am masked. Here I am hidden; no one knows I am here. But to-morrow there will be no more masks. It is Ash Wednesday. I run a risk of being nailed. I must crawl back to my hole. But you are free."

"Not quite."

"Well, more than I am, anyhow."

"Well, what then?"

"You must try and find out where that wedding-party goes."

"Goes?"

"Yes."

"Oh, I know."

"Where is it going, then?"

"To the Cadran Bleu."

"But it is not in that direction."

"Well, then, to La Rapée."

"Or somewhere else."

"They can do as they like,— weddings are free."

"That is not the point. I tell you that you must try and find out for me what that wedding is, who that old bloke belongs to, and where those folks come from."

"Oh, I say, ain't you smart! It's so jolly easy to find out a week afterward where a wedding-party has gone that passed through Paris on Shrove Tuesday. A needle in a bundle of hay. It ain't possible!"

"No matter, you must try. Do you hear, Azelma?"

The two files resumed their movement on both sides of the boulevard, in opposite directions, and the carriage of masks lost sight of the bride's "go-cart."

CHAPTER II

JEAN VALJEAN STILL HAS HIS ARM IN A SLING

TO realize one's dream,— to whom is this granted? There must be elections for this in heaven; we are all unconscious candidates; the angels vote. Cosette and Marius had been elected.

Cosette, both at the mayor's office and at church, was brilliant and touching. Toussaint, helped by Nicolette, had dressed her.

Cosette wore her dress of Binche lace over a white silk skirt, a veil of English point, a necklace of fine pearls, and a wreath of orange blossoms; all this was white, and in this whiteness she was radiant. It was an exquisite candour expanding and becoming transfigured in light. She looked like a virgin on the point of becoming a goddess.

Marius's beautiful hair was shining and perfumed; here

and there under the thick curls were pale lines,— the scars of the barricade.

The grandfather, superb, with head erect, combining in his toilet and his manners all the elegances of the time of Barras, gave his arm to Cosette. He took the place of Jean Valjean, who, his arm being still in a sling, could not give his hand to the bride.

Jean Valjean, dressed all in black, followed them with a smile.

"Monsieur Fauchelevent," said the grandfather, "this is a glorious day. I vote for the end of afflictions and cares. Henceforth there must be no sorrow anywhere. By heaven, I decree joy! Misfortune has no right to exist. It is a disgrace to the blue of heaven that there should be unhappy men. Evil does not come from man, who, at bottom, is good. All human miseries have their capital and central government in hell, otherwise known as the Tuileries of the devil. There now, I am making demagogic remarks. For my part, I have no political opinions left; and all I stick to is, Let all men be rich,— that is to say, gay."

When, at the end of all the ceremonies,— after pronouncing before the mayor and before the priest every possible form of consent, after signing the register at the city hall and in the sacristy, after exchanging rings, after kneeling side by side under the canopy of white moire in the smoke of the censer,— they arrived, hand-in-hand, admired and envied by all (Marius in black, she in white), preceded by the beadle with the epaulets of a colonel, striking the flag-stones with his halbert, between two rows of dazzled spectators, at the church doors, which were thrown wide open, ready to get into their carriage,— and all was over. Cosette could not yet believe that it was real. She looked at Marius, she looked at the crowd, she looked at heaven; it seemed as if she were afraid of awaking, her astonished and anxious air adding something strangely enchanting to her beauty. Going home they both rode in the same carriage, Marius seated by Cosette, M. Gillenormand and Jean Valjean opposite.

Aunt Gillenormand had fallen back a step, and was in the second carriage.

"Well, children," said the grandfather, "here you are now, a baron and a baroness, with thirty thousand livres a year."

And Cosette, nestling close to Marius, caressed his ear with the angelic whisper: "It is true, then. My name is Marius, and I am Madame Thou."

These two beings were resplendent. They had reached the irrevocable and irrecoverable moment,— the dazzling point of intersection of all youth and all joy. They realized Jean Prouvaire's verses,— together they did not count forty years. It was marriage sublimated; these two children were two lilies. They did not see each other, but contemplated each other. Cosette saw Marius with a halo round his head; Marius saw Cosette upon an altar. And upon that altar, and beneath that halo, the two apotheoses blending in the background, behind a cloud for Cosette, in a flash of light for Marius, there was the ideal thing, the real thing, the meeting-place of kisses and of dreams,— the nuptial pillow.

All the torments they had gone through returned to them in intoxication. It seemed to them as if their griefs, their sleepless nights, their tears, their anguish, their terrors, and their despair, converted into caresses and sunbeams, rendered more charming still the charming hour which was approaching; and that their sorrows were so many handmaidens who performed the toilet of joy. How good it is to have suffered! Their misfortunes made a halo round their happiness. The long agony of their love ended in an ascension.

There was the same enchantment in these two souls,— tinged with voluptuousness in Marius and with modesty in Cosette. They said to each other in a whisper: "We will go back and look at our little garden in the Rue Plumet." The folds of Cosette's dress lay across Marius's feet.

Such a day is an ineffable mixture of dream and reality. We possess and we suppose. We still have time before us to divine. It is an indescribable emotion on that day to be

at midday and dream of midnight. The delights of those two hearts overflowed upon the crowd, and imparted joy to the passers-by.

People stopped in the Rue St. Antoine, in front of St. Paul's to look through the carriage window at the orange flowers trembling on Cosette's head.

Then the wedding party returned to the Rue des Filles du Calvaire,— home. Marius, side by side with Cosette, ascended, triumphant and radiant, that staircase up which he had been dragged in a dying state. The beggars collected before the gate, and, dividing the contents of their purses, blessed them. There were flowers everywhere. The house was no less fragrant than the church: after the incense, roses. They fancied they could hear voices singing in infinitude; they had God in their hearts; destiny appeared to them like a ceiling of stars; they saw above their heads the light of dawn. Marius gazed at Cosette's charming bare arm and the rosy visions vaguely seen through the lace of her bodice; and Cosette, catching Marius's glance, blushed up to her eyes.

A number of old friends of the Gillenormand family had been invited; they thronged round Cosette, outvying each other in calling her Baroness.

The officer, Théodule Gillenormand, now a captain, had come from Chartres, where he was stationed, to be present at his cousin Pontmercy's marriage. Cosette did not recognize him.

He, on his side, accustomed to be thought a fine fellow by the women, remembered Cosette no more than any other girl.

"How right I was in not believing that story of the lancer's!" said Father Gillenormand to himself.

Cosette had never been more affectionate to Jean Valjean. She was in unison with Father Gillenormand; while he turned his joy into aphorisms and maxims she breathed forth love and beauty like a perfume. Happiness wishes everybody else to be happy.

As she talked to Jean Valjean she recalled inflections of

her voice belonging to the time when she was a little girl. She caressed him with a smile.

A banquet had been prepared in the dining-room.

An illumination *à giorno* is the necessary seasoning of great joy. Mist and darkness are not accepted by the happy. They do not consent to be black. Night, yes; darkness, no. If there be no sun one must be made. The dining-room was a garden of gay things. In the centre, above the white and glittering table, hung a Venetian chandelier, with all sorts of coloured birds — blue, violet, red, and green — perched among the candles; round the chandelier were girandoles, and on the walls were scones with three and four branches; mirrors, glasses, crystal, plate, china, crockery, gold, and silver,— all was sparkling and bright. The spaces between the candelabra were filled in with bouquets, so that where there was not a light there was a flower.

In the anteroom three violins and a flute played softly quartets by Haydn.

Jean Valjean had seated himself on a chair in the drawing-room, behind the door, which, being thrown back, almost concealed him. A few minutes before they sat down to table, Cosette came, as if inspired by a sudden whim, made him a low courtesy, spreading out her wedding-dress with both hands, and with a tenderly mocking look asked: —

"Father, are you satisfied?"

"Yes," said Jean Valjean, "I am content."

"Well, then, laugh."

Jean Valjean began to laugh. A few minutes later, Basque came in to announce that dinner was served.

The guests, preceded by M. Gillenormand, with Cosette on his arm, entered the dining-room, and collected round the table in proper order.

There was a large easy-chair on either side of the bride,— one for M. Gillenormand, the other for Jean Valjean. M. Gillenormand seated himself. The other chair remained empty. All looked round for Monsieur Fauchelevent. He was no longer there.

M. Gillenormand hailed Basque.

"Do you know where M. Fauchelevent is?"

"Yes sir, I do," replied Basque. "Monsieur Fauchelevent requested me to tell you, sir, that his hand pained him, and that he could not dine with the Baron and Baroness. He begged to be excused, but would call to-morrow. He has just left."

This empty chair chilled the effusion of the wedding-feast for a moment. But though M. Fauchelevent was absent, M. Gillenormand was present, and the grandfather shone for two. He declared that M. Fauchelevent was quite right to go to bed early if he were in pain, but that it was only a small hurt. This declaration was sufficient. Besides, what is one dark corner in such a flood of joy? Cosette and Marius were in one of those selfish and blessed moments, when people possess no other faculty than that of perceiving joy. And then, M. Gillenormand had an idea. "By Jupiter! this chair is empty. Come hither, Marius. Your aunt, though she has a right to you, will excuse you. This chair is for you. It is legal, and it is pretty,— Fortunatus by the side of Fortunata." All the guests applauded. Marius took Jean Valjean's place by Cosette's side, and things were so arranged that Cosette, who was at first saddened by the absence of Jean Valjean, ended by being pleased at it. From the moment that Marius became his substitute, Cosette would not have regretted God. She set her sweet little white satin-slippered foot upon Marius's foot.

When the easy-chair was occupied, M. Fauchelevent was effaced; and nothing was wanting.

And, five minutes later, all the guests were laughing, from one end of the table to the other, in utter forgetfulness.

At dessert, M. Gillenormand rose, with a glass of champagne in his hand, only half full, so that the palsy of his ninety-two years might not cause it to overflow, and proposed the health of the bridal pair.

"You shall not escape two sermons," he exclaimed.

"This morning you had one from the priest, and this evening you shall have one from grandpapa. Listen to me; I will give you a piece of advice: Adore each other. I do not beat about the bush, I go straight to the point: be happy! There are no sages in creation but the turtle-doves. Philosophers say, 'Moderate your joys;' but I say, 'Give free vent to your joys.' Love like fiends. Be fools. The philosophers are in their dotage. I should like to stuff their philosophy down their throats. Can we have too many perfumes, too many open rose-buds, too many singing nightingales, too many green leaves, and too much dawn in life? Can we love one another too much? Can we please one another too much? Take care, Estella, you are too pretty. Take care, Nemorino, you are too handsome! What jolly nonsense! Can people enchant each other, coax each other, and charm each other too much? Can they be too much alive? Can they be too happy? Moderate your joys,— oh, stuff! Down with the philosophers! Wisdom consists in rejoicing. Rejoice; let us rejoice. Are we happy because we are good, or are we good because we are happy? Is the Sancy diamond called the Sancy because it belonged to Harlay de Sancy, or because it weighs one hundred and six carats? I do not know. Life is full of such problems: the important point is to have both the Sancy and happiness. Be happy without picking flaws. Let us blindly obey the sun. What is the sun? It is love. And when I say love, I mean woman. Ah, ah! woman is omnipotent. Ask that demagogue, Marius, if he is not the slave of that little tyrant, Cosette. And gladly too, the coward. Woman! There is no Robespierre who can hold his own. Woman reigns. I am no longer royalist save toward that royalty. What is Adam? The kingdom of Eve. No '89 for Eve. There was the royal sceptre surmounted by the *fleur-de-lis*, there was the imperial sceptre surmounted by a globe, there was Charlemagne's sceptre of iron, and the sceptre of Louis the Great, which was of gold,— the Revolution twisted them between its thumb and forefinger like paltry straws; they are done

for, they are broken, they lie on the ground; there is no sceptre left. But just make me a revolution against that little embroidered handkerchief which smells of patchouly! I should like to see you do it. Try. Why is it so solid? Because it is a mere rag. Ah! you are the nineteenth century. Well, what then? We were the eighteenth! — and we were as foolish as you. Do not suppose that you have effected any vast change in the world because your epidemic is called cholera morbus, and your jig a cachucha. After all, woman must always be loved. I defy you to get out of that. Those devils are our angels. Yes; love, woman, and a kiss form a circle from which I defy you to escape; and for my own part I should be very glad to re-enter it. Who among you has seen the planet Venus, the great coquette of the abyss, the Célimène of ocean, rise in infinite space, calming all below her, looking down on the waves like any woman? The ocean is a rude Alcestis. Yet, grumble as he may, when Venus appears, he is forced to smile. That brute-beast submits. So do all. Anger, tempest, thunderbolts, foam up to the very ceiling: a woman comes upon the scene, a star arises,— down on your faces in the dust! Marius was fighting six months ago; to-day he is married. That is well done. Yes, Marius, yes, Cosette, you are right. Exist boldly one for the other, make us burst with rage because we cannot do the same, idolize each other. Take in both your beaks the little straws of felicity which exist on the earth, and make of them a nest for life. By jove! to love, to be loved,— what a splendid miracle when a man is young! Do not suppose that you invented it. I too have dreamed, and thought, and sighed; I too have had a moonlit soul. Love is a child six thousand years old. Love has a right to a long white beard. Methuselah is a baby beside Cupid. For sixty centuries, men and women have got out of the scrape by loving. The devil, who is cunning, took to hating man; but man, who is more cunning still, took to loving woman. In this way, he did himself more good than the devil did him harm. That trick was discovered at the same time with the earthly paradise.

My friends, the invention is old, but it is bran-new. Take advantage of it. Be Daphnis and Chloe, until you become Philemon and Baucis. Manage so that, when you are together, you may want for nothing, and that Cosette may be the sun to Marius, and Marius the whole world to Cosette. Cosette, let your fine weather be your husband's smiles; Marius, let your wife's tears be your rain. And never let it rain in your household. You have cribbed the lucky number in the lottery,— consecrated love. You have drawn a prize; keep it carefully, put it under lock and key, do not squander it, adore each other, and a fig for the rest. Believe what I tell you. It is good common-sense. Good sense cannot lie. Be a religion to each other. Every man has his own way of adoring God. But, zounds! the best way to adore God is to love one's wife. 'I love you'— that is my catechism. Whoever loves is orthodox. The favourite oath of Henri IV. places sanctity somewhere between guzzling and intoxication. *Ventre Saint Gris!* I do not belong to the religion of that oath. Woman is left out in it. That surprises me on the part of Henri IV.'s oath. My friends, long live woman! I am old, they say; it is amazing how much I feel like being young. I should like to go and listen to the bagpipes in the woods. Those children yonder, who succeed in being both beautiful and contented, intoxicate me. I am quite ready to marry if anybody will have me. It is impossible to imagine that God has made us for anything else than this: to idolize, to bill and coo, to preen our plumage, to be pigeons, to be cocks, to caress our loves from morning til night, to see ourselves reflected in our little wife, to be proud, to be triumphant, and to cut a dash,— such is the object of life. That, without offence, is what we thought in our day, when we were young. Oh, heavens! What charming women there were in those days, what ducks, and what daisies! I had my fling among them. So love each other. If we did not love each other, I really do not see what use there would be in having any springtime; and, for my own part, I should pray the good God to lock up all the fine things he

shows us, to take them from us, and to put back in his box the flowers, the birds, and the pretty girls. My children, receive the blessing of an old man."

The evening was lively, gay, and pleasant. The grandfather's sovereign good-humour was the key-note to the whole festivity, and every one caught the spirit of that almost centenarian cordiality. There was a little dancing, and a good deal of laughter; it was a merry wedding. That worthy old fellow "Once on a time" might well have been invited. However, he was present in the person of Father Gillenormand.

There was a tumult, and then silence.

The married couple disappeared.

Soon after midnight the Gillenormand mansion became a temple.

Here we pause. An angel stands on the threshold of wedding-nights, smiling, with his finger on his lip.

The soul is lost in contemplation before that sanctuary where the celebration of love is held.

There must be rays of light above such houses. The joy which they contain must escape through the walls in brilliancy, and vaguely irradiate the darkness. It is impossible that this sacred and fatal festival should not shed a celestial radiance into infinitude. Love is the sublime crucible in which the fusion of man and woman takes place; the one being, the triple being, the final being, the human trinity, issue from it. This birth of two souls in one must move darkness itself. The lover is the priest; the transported virgin shrinks in awe. Something of that joy ascends to God. Where true marriage is,— that is to say, where love exists,— the ideal enters in. A nuptial couch makes a nook of dawn in the darkness. If it were given to the eye of flesh to see the terrible and charming visions of higher life, it is probable that we should see the forms of night, unknown winged beings, blue wayfarers of the invisible, bending down,— a throng of sombre heads, round the luminous house, — satisfied, showering blessings, pointing out to each other the virgin bride, in her sweet alarm, a reflection of human

felicity on their divine countenances. If at that supreme hour the wedded pair, dazzled with pleasure, and believing themselves alone, were to listen, they would hear in their chamber a confused rustling of wings. Perfect happiness implies fellowship with angels. This dark little room has all heaven for its roof. When two mouths, made sacred by love, approach to create, it is impossible that there is not a tremor throughout the immense mystery of the stars above that ineffable kiss.

These felicities are the genuine ones. There is no joy beyond these joys. Love is the only ecstasy. All others weep.

To love or to have loved, that is enough. Ask nothing more after that. There is no other pearl to be found in the dark folds of life. To love is a consummation.

CHAPTER III

THE INSEPARABLE

WHAT had become of Jean Valjean?

Directly after he had laughed, at Cosette's loving command, as no one was paying any attention to him, Jean Valjean rose, and reached the anteroom unnoticed. It was the same room which he had entered, eight months before, black with mud and blood and gunpowder, bringing back the grandson to the grandfather. The old wainscoting was garlanded with flowers and leaves; the musicians were seated on the sofa upon which Marius had been laid. Basque, in black coat, knee-breeches, white stockings, and white gloves, was placing wreaths of roses round each of the dishes that was to be served up. Jean Valjean showed him his arm in its sling, bade him explain his absence, and quitted the house.

The long windows of the dining-room looked out on the

street. Valjean stood for some minutes motionless in the darkness under those radiant windows. He listened. The confused sounds of the banquet reached his ears. He heard the grandfather's loud and magisterial tones, the violins, the clatter of plates and glasses, the bursts of laughter; and through all that gay uproar he distinguished Cosette's soft, happy voice.

He left the Rue des Filles du Calvaire and returned to the Rue de l'Homme Armé.

To reach home, he went along the Rue St. Louis, the Rue Culture-St.-Catherine, and the Blancs Manteaux; it was a little longer, but it was the road by which he had been accustomed to come with Cosette for the last three months in order to avoid the crowd and the mud in the Rue Vieille du Temple.

This road, over which Cosette had passed, excluded the idea of any other course for him.

Jean Valjean returned home, lit his candle, and went upstairs. The apartments were empty. Not even Toussaint was there now. Jean Valjean's footsteps made more noise in the rooms than usual. All the wardrobes stood open. He entered Cosette's room. There were no sheets on the bed. The pillow, made of ticking, without a case or lace, was laid on the blankets folded at the foot of the bed, in which no one was to sleep again. All the small feminine articles which Cosette loved had been removed; only the heavy furniture and the four walls remained. Toussaint's bed was also unmade. The only bed made up and seeming to expect an occupant was his own.

He looked at the walls, closed some of the wardrobe drawers, and went and came from one room to another.

Then he returned to his own room and placed his candle on a table.

He had taken his arm out of the sling, and used his right hand as if he had no pain in it.

He went up to his bed, and his eyes fell — was it by accident, or was it purposely? — on the *inseparable*, of which

Cosette had been jealous, on the little valise which never left him. On June 4, when he came to the Rue de l'Homme Armé, he laid it on a round table by his bed. He now went to this table with some eagerness, took the key out of his pocket, and opened the portmanteau.

He slowly drew out of it the clothes in which, ten years before, Cosette had left Montfermeil; first, the little black gown, then the black neckerchief, then the stout shoes, which Cosette could almost have worn still, so small was her foot; next, the petticoat, then the apron, with pockets, and lastly, the woollen stockings. These stockings, which still showed the shape of a dainty little leg, were no longer than Jean Valjean's hand. All these articles were black. It was he who took them to Montfermeil for her. He laid each article on the bed as he took it out. He mused and he remembered. It was in winter, in a very cold December; she shivered, half-naked under her rags; her poor feet were quite red in her wooden shoes. He, Jean Valjean, had made her take off these rags and put on this mourning garb. Her mother must have been pleased in her grave to see her daughter wearing mourning for her, and, above all, to see that she was well clothed and was warm. He thought of that forest of Montfermeil; they had traversed it together, Cosette and he; he thought of what the weather was, of the leafless trees, of the wood without birds, and the sky without sun; it mattered not, it was charming. He arranged the little clothes on the bed, the handkerchief next the petticoat, the stockings along with the shoes, the apron beside the dress, and he looked at them, one after the other. She was not much taller than that, she had her big doll in her arms, she had put her louis d'or in the pocket of this apron, she laughed, they walked along hand-in-hand, she had no one in the world but him.

Then his venerable white head fell on the bed, his stoical old heart broke; his face was buried in Cosette's clothes, and had any one passed upstairs at that moment he would have heard dreadful sobs.

CHAPTER IV

IMMORTALE JECUR.[1]

THE old, terrible struggle, of which we have already seen several phases, began again.

Jacob wrestled with the angel only one night. Alas! how many times have we seen Jean Valjean fighting hand-to-hand in the darkness with his conscience, and struggling frantically against it!

Extraordinary struggle! Sometimes the foot slips; again, the ground gives way. How many times had that conscience, clinging to the right, strangled and overthrown him! How many times had inexorable truth set its knee upon his breast! How many times had he, felled by the light, begged for mercy! How many times had that implacable spark kindled within and above him by the bishop, dazzled him when he by force would fain have been blind! How many times had he risen again in the contest, clung to the rock, supported himself by a sophistry, and been dragged in the dust, now getting the upper hand of his conscience, and again, overthrown by it! How many times, after a slip, after some specious and treacherous reasoning of egotism, had he heard his angry conscience cry in his ear: "A trip! scoundrel!" How many times had his refractory thoughts expired convulsively, under the evidence of duty! Resistance to God! Funereal sweats. How many secret wounds, which he alone felt bleeding! How many bruises in his lamentable existence! How many times had he risen, bleeding, bruised, crushed, enlightened, despair in his heart, serenity in his soul! and, though vanquished, he felt himself the victor. And having dislocated, tortured, and broken him, his conscience stood over him, terrible, tranquil, and luminous, and said to him: "Now, go in peace!"

[1] See the story of Prometheus.

What a mournful peace, alas! after so dark a contest.

That night, however, Jean Valjean felt that he was fighting his last battle.

An agonizing question presented itself.

Predestinations are not all direct: they do not open up in a straight line before the predestined man; they have blind alleys, zigzags, awkward turns, and perplexing cross-roads offering a choice between various ways. Jean Valjean had halted at the most dangerous of these cross-roads.

He had reached the final crossing of good and evil. That gloomy intersection lay before his eyes. This time again, as had already happened in other painful interludes, two roads opened before him, one tempting, the other terrifying. Which should he take?

He was counselled to the one which terrified him by the mysterious index finger which we all see every time that we fix our eyes upon the darkness.

Jean Valjean had once again to choose between the terrible haven and the smiling snare.

Is it true, then, the soul may be healed, destiny never? What a frightful thing,— an incurable destiny!

The question which presented itself was this: How was Jean Valjean going to behave with regard to the happiness of Cosette and Marius? That happiness he had willed, he had made; he had himself plunged it into his vitals; and now as he gazed at it he felt the sort of satisfaction which a cutler might feel who recognized his trade-mark upon a knife when he drew it reeking from his own breast.

Cosette had Marius; Marius possessed Cosette. They had everything, even wealth. And it was his doing.

But, now that this happiness existed, now that it was there, how was he, Jean Valjean, to treat it? Should he force himself upon it? Should he treat it as if it belonged to him? Doubtless, Cosette belonged to another; but should he, Jean Valjean, retain of Cosette all that he could retain? Should he remain the sort of father, scarcely seen but respected, which he had hitherto been; should he introduce

himself quietly into Cosette's house; should he carry his past to that future without saying a word; should he present himself there as one having a right, and should he sit down, veiled, at that luminous hearth? Should he take the hands of those innocent creatures in his two tragic hands with a smile; should he warm at the peaceful fire of the Gillenormand drawing-room the feet which dragged after them the degrading shadow of the law; should he join company with Cosette and Marius; should he render the obscurity on his brow and the cloud on theirs heavier yet; should he join his catastrophe to their two felicities; should he continue to be silent,— in a word, should he be the ominous mute of destiny beside those two happy beings?

We must be accustomed to fatality and to meeting it before we dare to raise our eyes when certain questions appear to us in their terrible nakedness. Good or evil hide behind this stern note of interrogation. "What will you do?" asks the sphinx.

Jean Valjean had been tried and tested. He looked the sphinx in the eye.

He studied the pitiless problem from all sides.

Cosette, that charming existence, was the raft of this shipwrecked man. What should he do? Cling to it or let it go?

If he clung to it, he emerged from disaster, he returned to sunshine, he let the bitter water drip from his clothes and his hair,— he was saved, he lived.

Suppose he let it go?

Then the bottomless gulf.

He thus held sad counsel with his thoughts; or, to speak more correctly, he fought. He rebelled furiously within himself, at one moment against his will, at another against his conviction.

It was fortunate for Jean Valjean that he was able to weep. That enlightened him, perhaps. Still, the beginning was fierce. A tempest, more furious than that which had formerly driven him to Arras, was let loose within him.

The past came back to him face to face with the present; he compared them and sobbed. The sluice of tears once opened, the despairing man writhed.

He felt himself stopped short.

Alas! in the deadly fight between our egotism and our duty, when we thus retreat inch by inch before our incommutable ideal, bewildered, desperate, exasperated at having to yield, disputing the ground, hoping for possible flight, seeking to escape, what a sudden and sinister resistance the foot of a wall behind us offers!

To feel the sacred shadow which forms an obstacle!

The inexorable invisible, what a crushing force!

Thus we have never done with conscience. Take your choice, Brutus; take your choice, Cato. It is bottomless, being God. You may cast into this pit the labour of your whole life, your fortune, your wealth, your success, your liberty or your country, your comfort, your repose, your joy. More! more! more! empty the vase! tip the urn! you must end by casting in your heart.

There is a tun like this somewhere in the midst of the hells of old.

Are we not pardonable if we refuse at last? Can that which is inexhaustible have any claim? Are not endless chains too much for human strength? Who then, would blame Sisyphus and Jean Valjean for saying, "It is enough!"

The obedience of matter is limited by friction. Is there no limit to the obedience of the soul? If perpetual motion be impossible, can perpetual sacrifice be required?

The first step is nothing; it is the last that is hard. What was the Champmathieu affair compared to Cosette's marriage and what it entailed? What is a return to the hulks compared to entrance into nothingness?

Oh, first step to be descended, how gloomy thou art! Oh, second step, how black thou art!

How could he help turning away his head now?

Martyrdom is sublimation,— corrosive sublimation. It is torture which consecrates. A man may consent to it for the

first hour; he sits on the throne of red-hot iron, he puts the crown of red-hot iron upon his head, he accepts the red-hot globe, he takes the red-hot sceptre, but he has still to don the mantle of flame; and is there not a moment when the miserable flesh revolts and the man abdicates from torment?

At length Jean Valjean entered the calmness of prostration.

He weighed, he pondered, he considered the alternatives, the mysterious balance of light and shadow.

Should he force his galleys on these two radiant children, or himself consummate his irremediable destruction? On one side was the sacrifice of Cosette, on the other his own.

Which solution did he accept?

What decision did he make? What was the final mental answer to the incorruptible interrogatory of fate? What door did he resolve to open? Which side of his life did he make up his mind to close and condemn? Amid all those unfathomable precipices that surrounded him, which did he choose? What extremity did he accept? To which of these gulfs did he nod his head?

His confusing revery lasted all night.

He remained there till day-break in the same position, bent double over the bed, prostrate beneath the enormity of fate, crushed perhaps, alas! his fists clinched, his arms stretched at right angles like a man who had been crucified unnailed, and thrown face downward on the ground. He remained thus for twelve hours,— the twelve hours of a long winter's night,— frozen, without raising his head or uttering a syllable. He was motionless as a corpse, while his thoughts wallowed on the earth or soared aloft, now like the hydra, and now like the eagle. To see him thus, you would have thought him dead. All at once he started convulsively, and his mouth, pressed to Cosette's clothes, kissed them; then one saw that he was alive.

One? Who? For Jean Valjean was alone, and there was no one there.

The *One* who is in the darkness.

BOOK VII

THE LAST DROP IN THE CUP

CHAPTER I

THE SEVENTH CIRCLE AND THE EIGHTH HEAVEN

THE day after a wedding is solitary. We respect the retirement of happy people, and to some extent their lengthened slumbers also. The confusion of visits and congratulations does not begin till later on. On the morning of February 17, it was a little past midday when Basque, with napkin and feather-duster under his arm, busily "clearing up the anteroom," heard a low tap at the door. There was no ring, which was discreet on such a day. Basque opened and saw M. Fauchelevent. He showed him to the drawing-room, which was still topsy-turvy, and looked like the battle-field of the previous day's joys.

"Really, sir," observed Basque, "we all overslept."

"Is your master up?" asked Jean Valjean.

"How is your hand, sir?" replied Basque.

"Better. Is your master up?"

"Which one? The old one or the new one?"

"Monsieur Pontmercy."

"The Baron!" said Basque, drawing himself up.

A baron is, above all, a baron to his servants; some share of the dignity falls to them, and they get what a philosopher would call a splash from the title, and that flatters them. Marius, be it said in passing, fighting republican

as he had proved, was now a baron, in spite of himself. A small revolution had taken place in the family with reference to this title. It was M. Gillenormand now who clung to it, and Marius who cared little for it. But Colonel Pontmercy had written, "My son will bear my title." Marius obeyed. And then Cosette, in whom the woman was beginning to bloom out, was delighted to be a baroness.

"The Baron?" repeated Basque; "I will go and see. I will tell him that Monsieur Fauchelevent is here."

"No; do not tell him it is I. Tell him that some one wishes to speak to him privately, and do not mention my name."

"Ah!" said Basque.

"I wish to surprise him."

"Ah!" repeated Basque, uttering his second "Ah!" to himself in explanation of the first.

And he left the room.

Jean Valjean remained alone.

The drawing-room, as we said, was all in disorder. It seemed as if, by listening, vague echoes of the wedding might still be heard. On the floor were all sorts of flowers which had fallen from garlands and head-dresses. The candles, burned down to the socket, added wax stalactites to the crystal drops of the chandeliers. Not an article of furniture was in its place. In the corners, three or four easy-chairs, drawn close together in a circle, looked as if they were continuing a conversation. The whole effect was joyous. A certain grace lingers about a dead festival. It was happy. Upon those disarranged chairs, amid those fading flowers, and under those extinguished lights people have thought of joy. The sun succeeded the chandelier, and made its way gayly into the drawing-room.

A few moments passed. Jean Valjean stood motionless in the spot where Basque left him. He was very pale. His eyes were hollow, and so sunk in their sockets by sleeplessness that they almost disappeared. His black coat had the weary creases of a garment which has been up all night. The

elbows were white with that lint which rubbing against linen leaves on cloth. Jean Valjean looked at the window outlined on the floor at his feet by the sun.

There was a noise at the door, he raised his eyes.

Marius came in with head erect, laughing mouth, a peculiar light on his face, a smooth forehead, and a flashing eye. He, too, had not slept.

"It is you, father!" he exclaimed, as he saw Jean Valjean. "Why, that fool of a Basque put on a mysterious air! But you are too early. It is only half-past twelve. Cosette is asleep."

That word "father" addressed to M. Fauchelevent by Marius meant "supreme felicity." There had always been, as we know, a gulf, a coldness, and constraint between them: ice to be melted or broken. Marius was so intoxicated that the gulf disappeared, the ice dissolved, and M. Fauchelevent was to him, as to Cosette, a father.

He went on; his words poured forth, as is usual in such divine paroxysms of joy:—

"How glad I am to see you! If you only knew how we missed you yesterday! Good-morning, father. How is your hand? Better, is it not?"

And, satisfied with the favourable answer which he gave to himself, he went on:—

"You may believe that we have talked of you, both of us. Cosette loves you so dearly. You must not forget that you have a room here. We will not hear a word about the Rue de l'Homme Armé. We will have no more of that. How could you go and live in a street like that, which is sickly, and mean, and poor, which has a barrier at one end, where you are always cold, and which no one can enter? You must come and settle yourself here, and this very day, or you will have to deal with Cosette. She intends to lead us all by the nose, I warn you. You have seen your room; it is close to ours and looks out on the garden. We have had the lock mended, the bed is made,— it is all ready; you have only to move in. Cosette has put a huge old plush easy-chair

close to your bed and she said to it, 'Open your arms to him.' Every spring a nightingale comes to the clump of acacias opposite your windows. It will be there in two months more. You will have its nest on your left, and ours on your right; at night it will sing, and by day Cosette will talk. Your room faces due south. Cosette will arrange your books, the 'Travels of Captain Cook,' and the other, 'Vancouver's Travels,' and all your things. I believe there is a little valise to which you are attached; I have arranged a corner of honour for it. You have won my grandfather's heart; you just suit him. We will live together. Do you play whist? You will overwhelm my grandfather with delight if you play whist. You will take Cosette for a walk on the days when I go to the courts; you will give her your arm, as you used to do, you know, in the Luxembourg garden. We are absolutely determined to be happy, and you shall share our happiness. Do you hear, papa? By the by, you will breakfast with us this morning?

"I have something to say to you, sir," said Valjean. "I am an ex-convict."

The limit of acute sounds perceptible may be exceeded for the mind as well as for the ear. Those words, "I am an ex-convict," coming from the mouth of M. Fauchelevent and entering the ear of Marius, passed the bounds of possibility. Marius did not hear. It seemed to him that something had just been said to him, but he knew not what. He stood with gaping mouth. Then he noticed that the man who spoke to him was frightful to behold. Absorbed in his own raptures, he had not up to this moment observed that terrible pallor.

Jean Valjean unfastened the black cravat that supported his right arm, undid the linen rolled round his hand, bared his thumb, and showed it to Marius.

"There is nothing the matter with my hand," said he.

Marius looked at the thumb.

"There never was anything the matter with it," added Jean Valjean.

There was, in fact, no sign of any injury.

Jean Valjean continued: "It was proper that I should be absent from your marriage. I absented myself so far as I could. I feigned this wound that I might not commit a forgery, and make the marriage-deeds, null and void,— that I might escape signing them."

Marius stammered:—

"What does this mean?"

"It means," replied Jean Valjean, "that I have been in the galleys."

"You are driving me mad!" cried Marius, horrified.

"Monsieur Pontmercy," said Jean Valjean, "I was nineteen years in the galleys for robbery. Then I was sentenced for life for robbery,— for a second offence. At the present moment I am an escaped convict."

In vain Marius shrank from the reality, refused the fact, and resisted the evidence; he was obliged to yield. He began to understand; and, as always happens in such cases, he understood too much. He shuddered inwardly at a hideous flash of enlightenment; an idea that made him shiver crossed his mind. He foresaw a frightful destiny for himself in the future.

"Say all! say all!" he exclaimed. "You are Cosette's father!" And he fell back two steps, with a movement of indescribable horror.

Jean Valjean threw up his head with such majesty of attitude that he seemed to rise to the ceiling.

"You must needs believe, me, sir, although the oath of men like us is not taken in a court of justice —"

Here he paused; then, with a sort of supreme and sepulchral authority he added, speaking slowly, and dwelling on each syllable:—

"You must believe me. I Cosette's father! Before Heaven, no, Baron Pontmercy. I am a peasant of Faverolles. I earned my livelihood by pruning trees. My name is not Fauchelevent, but Jean Valjean. I am nothing to Cosette. Reassure yourself."

Marius stammered:—

"Who will prove it to me?"

"I do, since I tell you so."

Marius looked at that man. He was calm and sad. No lie could come from such calm. That which is frozen is sincere. Truth was evident in that chill of the tomb.

"I believe you," said Marius.

Jean Valjean bowed his head as if to note the fact, and continued:—

"What am I to Cosette? A passer-by. Ten years ago I did not know that she existed. I love her, it is true. We love a child whom we have known as young when old ourselves. When we are old we have the feelings of a grandfather for all little children. You can, I suppose, imagine that I have something which resembles a heart. She was an orphan. Without father or mother. She needed me. That is why I came to love her. Children are so weak that the first-comer,— even a man like me,— may be their protector. I performed this duty to Cosette. I do not suppose that so small a thing can really be called a good action; but if it be a good action,— well, say that I did it. Write down that extenuating fact. To-day Cosette passes out of my life; our two roads part. Henceforth I can do nothing more for her. She is Madame Pontmercy. Her providence has changed. She has gained by the change. All is well. As for the six hundred thousand francs, you say nothing of them, but I will meet your thought half-way; they are a deposit. How did it come into my hands? No matter. I give up the deposit. Nothing more can be required of me. I complete the restitution by giving my real name. This too concerns myself. I am anxious that you should know who I am."

And Jean Valjean looked Marius in the face.

All that Marius felt was tumultuous and incoherent. Certain blasts of the wind of destiny produce these stormy waves in our soul.

We have all had these moments of trouble in which everything within us is dispersed; we say the first things that occur to us which are not always precisely those which we ought

to say. There are sudden revelations which we cannot bear, and which intoxicate like a potent wine. Marius was stunned by the new situation which presented itself to him, and spoke to this man almost as if he were angry with him for this avowal.

"But why," he exclaimed, "do you tell me all this? Who forces you to do so? You might have kept your secret to yourself. You are neither denounced, nor pursued, nor tracked. You have some motive for making such a revelation out of sheer wantonness. Conclude. There is something more. For what purpose do you make this confession? What is your motive?"

"My motive?" answered Jean Valjean, in a voice so low and dull that it seemed as if he were speaking to himself rather than to Marius. "From what motive, indeed, does this convict come here and say, 'I am a convict?' Well, yes! my motive is a strange one. It is out of honesty. It is my misfortune to have a thread in my heart which holds me fast. It is especially when a man is old that this sort of thread is most solid. A whole life falls in ruins about it; but it resists. Had I been able to tear away that thread, to break it, to untie or to cut the knot, go a long way off, I should have been safe. I had only to start. There are diligences in the Rue du Bouloy: you are happy; I am off. I tried to break that thread. I pulled at it; it held firm; it did not break; I tore my heart out with it. Then I said: I cannot live anywhere else. I must remain. Well, yes, you are right; I am a fool. Why not simply remain? You offer me a room in your house. Madame Pontmercy loves me dearly. She said to that arm-chair: 'Open your arms to him.' Your grandfather asks nothing better than to have me; I suit him. We will all live together, have our meals in common; I will give my arm to Cosette,— to Madame Pontmercy (forgive me, it is a habit); we will have but one roof, one table, one fire, the same chimney-corner in winter, the same walk in summer,— that is joy, that is happiness, that is everything. We will live as one family. One family!"

At that word Jean Valjean became fierce. He folded his arms, stared at the boards beneath his feet as if he wished to dig a pit in them, and his voice suddenly became loud:—

"As one family! No. I belong to no family; I do not belong to yours. I do not even belong to the human family. In houses where people are among themselves I am in the way. There are families, but none for me. I am an unfortunate wretch; I am left outside. Had I a father and mother? I almost doubt it. On the day when I gave that child in marriage, all was ended. I have seen her happy, and that she was with the man she loves; that there is a kind old man here, a household of two angels, and every joy in this house, and that it was well; and I said to myself: 'Do not enter.' I might lie, it is true, might deceive you all, and remain Monsieur Fauchelevent. So long as it was for her, I could lie; but now it would be for myself I must not. I had only to be silent, it is true, and all would go on. You ask me what compels me to speak? A strange thing,— my conscience. It would have been very easy, however, to hold my tongue. I spent the night in trying to persuade myself into it. You question me, and what I have just told you is so extraordinary that you have the right to do so. Well, yes, I spent the night in giving myself reasons. I gave myself excellent reasons; I did what I could. But there are two things in which I could not succeed: I could neither break the thread which holds me by the heart, fixed, sealed, and riveted here, nor silence some one who speaks to me softly when I am alone. That is why I have come to confess all to you this morning. — all, or nearly all. It is useless to tell what only concerns myself; I keep that to myself. You know the essentials. So I took my mystery and brought it to you. I ripped up my secret before your eyes. It was not an easy resolution to form. I debated the point all night long. Ah, you think I did not tell myself that this was no Champmathieu affair, that in hiding my name I did no one any harm, that the name of Fauchelevent was given me by Fauchelevent himself out of gratitude for a service rendered, and

that I might fairly keep it, and that I should be happy in that room which you offer me, that I should not be at all in the way, that I should keep to my own little corner, and that while you had Cosette I should have the idea that I was in the same house with her. Each would have his share of happiness. To continue to be Monsieur Fauchelevent would settle everything. Yes, except my soul. There would be joy all round me, but the depths of my soul would remain black. Thus I should have remained Monsieur Fauchelevent; thus I should have hidden my real face; thus in the presence of your happiness I should have had an enigma; thus in the midst of your broad sunshine I should have darkness; then, without crying 'Look out!' I should have quietly introduced the hulks to your hearth; I should have taken a seat at your table with the thought that if you knew who I was you would drive me away; I should have allowed myself to be served by servants who, had they known, would have said, 'How horrible!' I should have touched you with my elbow, which you have a right to consider an insult; I should have swindled you out of shakes of the hand. There would have been in your house a division of respect between venerable white locks and branded white locks; in your most intimate hours, when every heart seemed thrown wide open to every other heart, when we four were together,— the grandfather, you two, and I,— there would have been a stranger there. I should have lived side by side with you, shared your existence, my only anxiety to keep the lid closed tight upon my dreadful past. Thus I, a dead man, should have imposed myself upon you who are living. I should have sentenced her to endure me for life. You, Cosette, and I would have been three heads in the green cap! Do you not shudder? I am only the most crushed of men; I should have been the most monstrous. And that crime I should have committed daily! and that lie I should have told daily! and that face of night I should have worn daily! and I should have given you daily, daily, a share in my stigma! You, my well-beloved, you, my children, you, my innocent ones! Is it nothing to hold one's tongue. Is

it an easy matter to keep silent? No, it is not easy. There is a silence which lies. And my lie, and my fraud, and my indignity, and my cowardice, and my treachery, and my crime, I should have drained drop by drop; I should have spat it out, and then drunk it again; I should have ended at midnight and begun again at midday, and my 'good-morning' would have lied, and my 'good-night' would have lied, and I should have slept upon it; I should have eaten it with my bread; and I should have looked Cosette in the face, and answered the smile of the angel with the smile of the damned; and I should have been an abominable scoundrel! And to what end? To be happy! I happy! Have I the right to be happy? I stand outside of life, sir."

Jean Valjean paused; Marius listened. Such chains of ideas and agonies cannot be interrupted. Jean Valjean lowered his voice again, but it was no longer a dull voice; it was a sinister voice.

"You ask why I speak? I am neither denounced nor pursued nor tracked, you say. Yes, I am denounced! Yes, I am pursued! Yes, I am tracked! By whom? By myself. It is I who bar my own passage; and I drag myself along, and I push myself, and I arrest myself, and I execute myself; and when a man holds himself, he is securely held."

And seizing his own collar, and dragging it toward Marius, he continued:—

"Look at that fist. Do you not think that it holds that collar so that it will not let it go? Well! conscience is such another grasp! If you would be happy, sir, you must never understand duty; for, so soon as you have understood it, it is implacable. It seems as if it punished you for understanding it; but no, it rewards you; for it places you in a hell where you feel God by your side. A man has no sooner torn his very vitals than he is at peace with himself."

And in a heartrending tone, he added:—

"Monsieur Pontmercy, this is not common-sense; I am an honest man. It is by degrading myself in your eyes that I raise myself in my own. This has happened to me once be-

fore, but it was less painful; it was nothing. Yes, an honest man. I should not be one if, through my fault, you had continued to esteem me; now that you despise me, I am. This fatal doom hangs upon my head, that as I can never have any but stolen consideration, that consideration humiliates me, and crushes me inwardly, and in order that I may respect myself people must despise me. Then I straighten up again. I am a galley-slave who obeys his conscience. I know very well that this does not sound probable. But what would you have me do? It is so. I have made engagements with myself; I keep them. There are encounters which bind us. There are hazards which involve us in duties. You see, Monsieur Pontmercy, many things have happened to me in my life."

Jean Valjean made another pause, swallowing his saliva with an effort, as if his words had a bitter after-taste, then he continued:—

"When a man has such a horror hanging over him, he has no right to make others share it unconsciously, he has no right to communicate his plague to them, he has no right to make them slip over his precipice without their perceiving it, he has no right to drag his red blouse over their shoulders, and no right to craftily encumber the happiness of others with his misery. To approach those who are healthy and touch them in the darkness with an invisible ulcer is hideous. Fauchelevent may have lent me his name, but I have no right to use it; he could give it to me, but I must not take it. A name is a self. You see, sir, I have thought a little and read a little, though I am a peasant; and you see that I express myself properly. I explain things to myself. I have carried out my own education. Well, yes; to abstract a name and place one's self under it is dishonest Letters of the alphabet may be filched, like a purse or a watch. To be a forgery in flesh and blood, to be a living false key, to enter among honest folk by picking their lock, never to look straight, but always to squint, to be infamous within,— no! no! no! no! It is better to suffer, bleed, weep, tear one's flesh with one's nails, to pass nights writhing in agony, to devour one's self body and soul.

That is why I have come to tell you all this,— out of sheer wantonness, as you remarked."

He breathed painfully, and flung his final word:—

"I once stole a loaf in order to live; to-day, I will not steal a name in order to live."

"To live!" interrupted Marius. "You do not need that name in order to live."

"Oh, I understand," replied Jean Valjean, raising and drooping his head several times in succession. There was a silence. Both were speechless, each sunk in a gulf of thought. Marius was sitting near a table and supporting the corner of his mouth on one of his fingers, which was bent back. Jean Valjean walked backward and forward. He stopped before a glass and remained motionless. Then, as if answering some mental reasoning, he said, as he looked into this glass, in which he did not see himself: —

"While now I am relieved."

He took up his march again, and went to the other end of the room. As he turned, he saw that Marius was watching his walk. Then he said in an indescribable tone: —

"I drag my leg a little. You understand why, now."

Then he turned fully round to Marius.

"And now, sir, imagine this: I have said nothing; I have remained Monsieur Fauchelevent; I have taken my place in your house; I am one of you; I am in my room; I come down to breakfast in the morning in my slippers; at night we go to the play, all three of us. I accompany Madame Pontmercy to the Tuileries and to the Place Royale; we are together, and you think me your equal. One fine day, I am here, you are here; we are talking and laughing. All at once you a hear a voice shout this name: 'Jean Valjean!' and lo! that fearful hand, the police, starts from the shadow, and suddenly tears off my mask!"

He was again silent; Marius had risen to his feet with a shudder. Jean Valjean resumed: —

"What do you say to that?"

Marius's silence answered

Jean Valjean continued: —

"You see very well that I am right in not holding my tongue. Be happy, be in heaven, be the angel of an angel; live in the sunshine and content yourself with it, and do not trouble yourself as to the way which a poor damned soul takes to open his heart and do his duty. You see before you, sir, a wretched man."

Marius slowly crossed the room, and when he was by Jean Valjean's side, he offered him his hand.

But Marius was compelled to take that hand, which was not offered. Jean Valjean let him have his way; and it seemed to Marius that he pressed a hand of marble.

"My grandfather has friends," said Marius; "I will obtain your pardon."

"It is useless," replied Jean Valjean. "I am supposed to be dead, and that is enough. The dead are not subjected to supervision. They are supposed to rot in peace. Death is the same thing as pardon."

And, freeing the hand which Marius held, he added with a sort of inexorable dignity: —

"Moreover, my duty is the friend to whom I have recourse; and I need but one pardon,— that of my conscience."

At that moment the door opened gently at the other end of the drawing-room, and Cosette's head appeared in the opening. Only her sweet face was visible. Her hair was in charming disorder, her eyelids were still swollen with sleep. She made the movement of a bird thrusting its head out of the nest, looked first at her husband, then at Jean Valjean, and cried to them laughingly,— they thought they saw a smile at the heart of a rose:

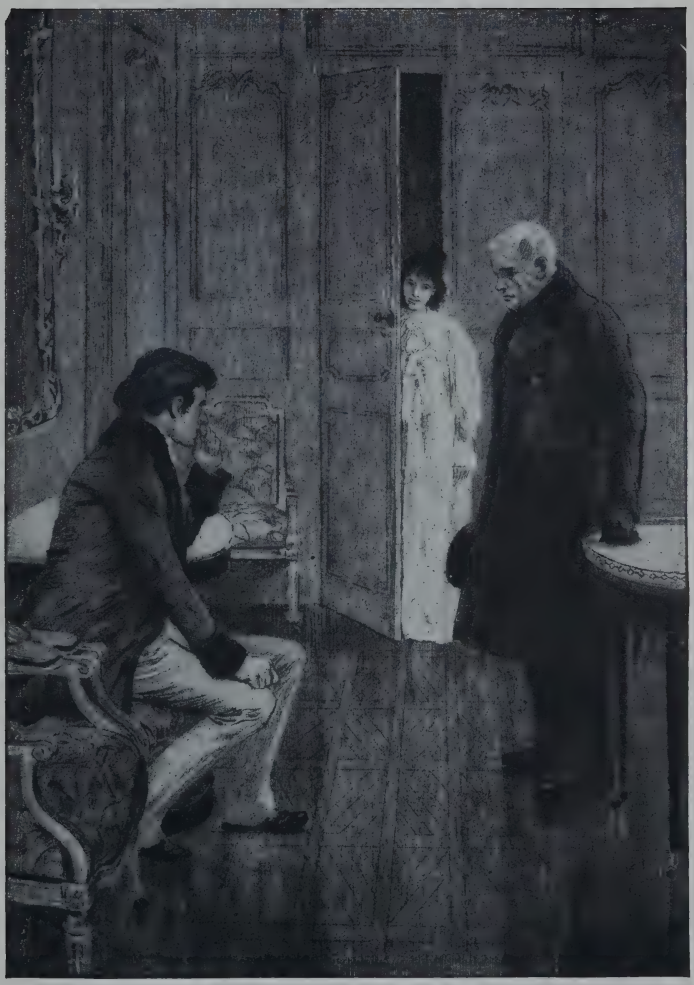
"I will wager that you are talking politics. How stupid that is, instead of being with me!"

Jean Valjean shuddered.

"Cosette," stammered Marius. And he paused.

They looked like two culprits.

Cosette, radiant, continued to look at them both. There were snatches of paradise in her eyes.



"At that moment the door opened gently at the other end of the drawing-room, and Cosette's head appeared in the opening."

Les Miserables. Jean Valjean. Page 262.

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"I have caught you in the act," said Cosette; "I just heard Father Fauchelevent through the door, saying: 'Conscience . . . My duty.' That is politics, that is; I will have none of it. People must not talk politics on the very next day. It is not fair."

"You are mistaken, Cosette," replied Marius. "We are talking business. We are talking about the best way of investing your six hundred thousand francs."

"That's not it at all," interrupted Cosette. "I am coming in. Do you want me here?"

And, passing resolutely through the door, she entered the drawing-room. She wore a loose dressing-gown with a thousand folds and wide sleeves, which fell from her neck to her feet. In the golden skies of old Gothic paintings there are such charming sacks to dress an angel in.

She contemplated herself from head to foot in a large mirror, and then exclaimed, with an outburst of ineffable ecstasy: —

"There was once upon a time a king and queen. Oh, how happy I am!"

This said, she courtesied to Marius and Jean Valjean.

"There," said she, "I am going to install myself near you in an easy-chair; we shall breakfast in half an hour. You may say just what you please, for I know very well that men must talk. I will be very good."

Marius took her by the arm and said lovingly: —

"We are talking business."

"By the way," answered Cosette, "I opened my window; a flock of sparrows [1] has just entered the garden,— birds, not masks. To-day is Ash Wednesday,— but not for the birds."

"I tell you that we are talking business. Go, my little Cosette; leave us for a moment. We are talking figures. They would only bore you."

"You have put on a charming cravat this morning, Marius. You are very coquettish, my lord. No, it will not bore me."

[1] Pierrots.

"I assure you that it will."

"No,— since it is you. I shall not understand you, but I shall listen to you. When a woman hears voices that she loves, she does not need to understand the words they say. To be together, that is all I want. I shall stay with you,— there!"

"You are my beloved Cosette! Impossible."

"Impossible!"

"Yes."

"Very good," remarked Cosette. "I was going to tell you some news. I could have told you that grandpapa is still asleep, that your aunt is at Mass, that the chimney in my papa Fauchelevent's room smokes, that Nicolette has sent for the chimney-sweep, that Nicolette and Toussaint have already quarrelled, that Nicolette ridicules Toussaint's stammer. Well, you shall know nothing. Oh, it is impossible? You shall see, sir, in my turn I shall say, 'It is impossible.' Who will be caught then? I implore you, my little Marius, let me stay here with you two."

"I swear to you, we must be alone."

"Well, am I anybody?"

Jean Valjean had not uttered a word. Cosette turned to him: —

"In the first place, father, I insist on your coming and kissing me. What do you mean by saying nothing, instead of taking my part? Did one ever see such a father as that? You see what an unhappy match I have made. My husband beats me. Come and kiss me at once.

Jean Valjean approached her.

Cosette turned to Marius.

"As for you, I turn up my nose at you."

Then she offered her forehead to Jean Valjean.

He moved a step toward her.

Cosette started.

"Father, you are pale. Does your arm pain you?"

"It is cured," said Jean Valjean.

"Did you sleep badly?"

"No."

"Are you sad?"

"No."

"Kiss me. If you are well, if you slept soundly, if you are happy, I will not scold you." And she again offered him her forehead.

Jean Valjean set a kiss on that brow, upon which there was a heavenly reflection.

"Smile."

Jean Valjean obeyed. It was the smile of a ghost.

"Now, defend me against my husband."

"Cosette!—" said Marius.

"Be angry, father. Tell him I am to stay. You can surely talk before me. You must think me very foolish. Are you saying anything very astonishing, then! Business, putting money in the bank,—a great matter truly. Men make mysteries out of nothing. I mean to stay. I am very pretty this morning. Marius, look at me." And, with an adorable shrug of the shoulders and the exquisite pout, she looked at Marius.

Something like a flash passed between those two beings. It was nothing to them that a third party was present.

"I love you!" said Marius.

"I adore you!" said Cosette. And they fell irresistibly into each other's arms.

"And now," continued Cosette, as she smoothed a crease in her dressing-gown, with a triumphant little grimace, "I shall stay."

"No, not that," replied Marius, imploringly. "We have something to finish."

"Still no?"

Marius assumed a serious tone:—

"I assure you, Cosette, that it is impossible."

"Ah, you put on your man's voice, do you sir? Very good, I will go. You did not support me, father. So you, my hard husband, and you, my dear papa, are tyrants. I shall go and tell grandpapa. If you think that I intend to

return and talk platitudes to you, you are mistaken. I am proud. I intend to wait for you now. You will see how dull you will be without me. I am going; very good." And she left the room.

Two seconds later the door opened again, her fresh, rosy face was again thrust between the two leaves. and she cried: —

"I am very angry!"

The door again closed, and darkness returned.

It was like a straggling sunbeam which, without suspecting it, had suddenly traversed the night.

Marius assured himself that the door was really closed.

"Poor Cosette," he muttered, "when she learns —"

At these words Jean Valjean trembled in every limb. He fixed his haggard eyes on Marius.

"Cosette! Oh, yes, to be sure, you mean to tell Cosette. It is only fair. Stay! I did not think of that. A man has strength for one thing, but not for another. Sir, I implore you, I entreat you, sir, give me your most sacred word of honour, do not tell her. Is it not enough that you know it? I was able to tell it of my own accord, without being forced to do so, I could have told it to the universe, to the whole world, and I should not have cared; but she, she does not know what it is, and it would terrify her. A convict!

"What! you would be obliged to explain it to her,— to tell her it is a man who has been in the galleys. She saw the chain-gang once. Oh, my God!"

He sank into a chair and buried his face in his hands.

No sound was heard, but by the heaving of his shoulders it was plain that he was weeping. Silent tears, terrible tears.

There is suffocation in a sob. A sort of convulsion seized him; he threw himself back in his chair as if to gain breath, letting his arms hang, and revealing to Marius his face bathed in tears, and Marius heard him murmur, so low that his voice seemed to come from a bottomless abyss:—

"Oh, I wish I might die!"

"Rest easy," said Marius, "I will keep your secret to myself."

And less moved perhaps than he should have been, but compelled for the last hour to become familiar with unexpected horrors, gradually seeing a convict take M. Fauchelevent's place before his very eyes, gradually overcome by that painful reality, and led by the natural inclination of the situation to measure the space which separated this man and himself, Marius added: —

"It is impossible for me not to say a word about the trust money which you have so faithfully and honestly given up. That is an act of probity. It is but fair that some reward should be given you. Fix the sum yourself; it shall be paid you. Do not fear to fix it very high."

"I thank you, sir," replied Jean Valjean, gently.

He was lost in thought for a moment mechanically drawing the tip of his forefinger across his thumb-nails; then he raised his voice: —

"All is nearly over. There is but one thing left me."

"What is it?"

Jean Valjean struggled to conquer a final hesitation, and faintly, almost breathlessly, he stammered, rather than said: —

"Now that you know, do you think sir, you who are master, that I ought not to see Cosette again?"

"I think that it would be better," replied Marius, coldly.

"I will not see her again," murmured Jean Valjean. And he moved toward the door.

His hand was on the knob, the latch yielded, the door opened, Jean Valjean was about to pass out, when he suddenly closed it again, and returned to Marius.

He was no longer pale; he was livid. There was a sort of tragic flame in his eyes instead of tears. His voice had grown strangely calm again.

"Stay, sir," he said; "if you allow me, I will come to see her. I assure you that I desire it greatly. If I had not longed to see Cosette I should not have made you the confes-

sion that I have. I should have gone away; but wishing to remain in the place where Cosette is, and to continue to see her, I was obliged to tell you everything honestly. You follow my reasoning, do you not? It is a thing easily understood. You see I have had her with me for nine years. We lived at first in that hovel on the boulevard, then in the convent, and then near the Luxembourg. It was there that you saw her for the first time. You remember her blue plush hat. Next we went to the district of the Invalides, where there was a gate and a garden in the Rue Plumet. I lived in a little back court where I could hear her pianoforte. Such was my life. We were never parted. That lasted nine years and some months. I was like her father and she was my child. I do not know whether you understand me, M. Pontmercy, but it would be hard to go away now, to see her no more, speak to her no more, and have nothing left. If you have no objection, I will come and see Cosette every now and then. I will not come too often. I will not stay long. You can tell them to show me into the little room on the ground-floor. I could certainly come in by the back door which is used by the servants, but that might create surprise perhaps; it is better, I think, for me to come in by the front door. Indeed, sir, I should like to see Cosette a little,—as seldom as you please. Put yourself in my place; it is all I have left. And then, again, we must be careful. If I did not come at all it would have a bad effect, and look peculiar. For instance, what I can do is to come in the evening, when it is beginning to grow dark."

"You can come every evening," said Marius, "and Cosette will expect you."

"You are kind, sir," said Jean Valjean.

Marius bowed to Jean Valjean; happiness escorted despair to the door, and the two men parted.

CHAPTER II

OBSCURITIES WHICH A REVELATION CONTAINS

MARIUS was overwhelmed.

The sort of estrangement which he had always felt for the man with whom he saw Cosette was now explained. There was something mysterious about that person, of which his instinct warned him.

This mystery was the most hideous of shames,— the galleys. This M. Fauchelevent was Jean Valjean, the convict.

To suddenly find such a secret in the midst of his happiness was like discovering a scorpion in a nest of turtle-doves.

Was the happiness of Marius and Cosette in future condemned to this proximity? Was it an accomplished fact? Did the acceptance of this man form a part of the marriage now consummated? Could nothing else be done?

Had Marius married the convict as well?

Although a man may be crowned with light and joy, though he enjoy the supreme rosy hour of life,— happy love,— such shocks would force even the archangel in his ecstasy, even the demigod in his glory, to shudder.

As always happens in transformation-scenes of this sort, Marius asked himself whether he were in no way to blame? Had he failed in foresight? Had he lacked prudence? Had he been wilfully blind? Slightly so, perhaps. Had he entered upon this love-adventure, which resulted in his marriage with Cosette, without taking sufficient care to throw light upon all the surroundings? He admitted,— it is thus by a series of successive admissions of ourselves in regard to ourselves that life gradually corrects us,— he admitted the visionary and chimerical side of his nature, a sort of internal cloud peculiar to many organizations, and which, in paroxysms of passion and grief, grows as the temperature of the soul

changes, and invades the entire man to such an extent that he becomes nothing more than a conscience enveloped in a fog. We have more than once hinted at this characteristic element in Marius's individuality.

He remembered that during the intoxication of his love, in the Rue Plumet, during those six or seven ecstatic weeks, he had not even spoken to Cosette of that drama in the Gorbeau hovel, where the victim was so strangely silent during both the struggle and the final escape. How had it happened that he had not spoken of it to Cosette? and yet it was so closely connected with her, and so frightful! How was it that he had not even mentioned the Thénardiers, and, especially, on the day when he met Eponine? He now found it almost difficult to explain his silence at that period. Still, he was able to account for it. He remembered his absorption, his intoxication for Cosette, his love drowning everything else, that abduction of one by the other into the ideal world, and perhaps, too, as the imperceptible amount of reason mingled with that violent and charming state of mind, a vague, dull instinct to hide and efface in his memory that fearful adventure, contact with which he dreaded, in which he wished to play no part, from which he stood aloof, and of which he could not be narrator or witness without being an accuser.

Moreover, those few weeks had passed like a flash; they had had time for nothing except to love.

In short, having weighed, revolved, and examined everything, supposing that he had described the Gorbeau trap to Cosette, and mentioned the Thénardiers to her whatever the consequences might have been,— even if he had discovered that Jean Valjean was a convict,— would that have changed him, Marius? would it have changed her, Cosette? Would he have drawn back? Would he have adored her any the less? Would he have refused to marry her? No. Would it have made any change in what had happened? No. There was nothing then to regret, nothing with which to reproach himself. All was well. There is a deity for those drunkards who are called lovers. Marius had blindly followed the road

which he would have selected had his eyes been open. Love had bandaged his eyes to lead him, whither? — to paradise.

But this paradise was henceforth complicated by an infernal proximity.

The old estrangement of Marius for this man, for this Fauchelevent who had become Jean Valjean, was now mingled with horror.

In this horror, let us say, there was some pity, and even a certain degree of surprise.

This robber, this hardened offender, had given up a deposit. And what a deposit! Six hundred thousand francs!

He alone held the secret of that deposit. He might have kept it all, but he gave it all up.

Moreover, he had revealed his situation of his own accord. Nothing compelled him to do so. If it were known who he was, it was through himself. There was in that confession more than the acceptance of humiliation,— there was the acceptance of peril. For a condemned man, a mask is not a mask but a shelter. He had renounced that shelter. A false name is security, and he had thrown away that false name. He, the galley-slave, might have hidden himself forever in an honest family; he had resisted that temptation. And from what motive? Through a conscientious scruple. He himself explained this in the irresistible accents of truth. In short, whatever this Jean Valjean might be, his was undoubtedly a conscience which was awakening. Some mysterious rehabilitation had begun; and according to all appearances, scruples had been master of this man for a long time past. Such fits of justice and honesty do not characterize vulgar natures. An awakening of the conscience is greatness of soul.

Jean Valjean was sincere. This sincerity, visible, palpable, irrefragable, and evident even in the grief which it caused him, rendered all inquiries useless, and lent weight to all that this man said.

Here, for Marius, was a strange reversal of situations. What did M. Fauchelevent inspire? Distrust. What did Jean Valean lead him to feel? Confidence.

In the mysterious balance-sheet of this Jean Valjean which Marius drew up thoughtfully, he verified the credit, he verified the debit, and he tried to make them balance.

But all this was in a storm. Marius, striving to form a distinct idea of this man, and pursuing Jean Valjean, so to speak, in the depths of his thought, lost him, and again found him in a fatal mist.

The honest restoration of the trust money, the probity of the confession, were good. They formed, as it were, a break in the cloud; but then the cloud became black once more.

Confused as Marius's memories were, some shadow of them returned to him.

What, after all, was that adventure in the Jondrette garret Why, on the arrival of the police, did that man, instead of entering a complaint, escape?

Here Marius found the answer: because that man was a convict who had broken his ban.

Another question: Why did that man come to the barricade? For now Marius again distinctly saw that recollection which re-appeared in his emotions like writing in sympathetic ink held before the fire. That man was at the barricade. He did not fight. What did he want there? Before this question a spectre rose, and gave the answer: Javert.

Marius now remembered perfectly the mournful vision of Jean Valjean dragging Javert, bound out of the barricade; and he again heard behind the corner of the little Mondétour Lane the frightful pistol-shot. There was, probably, hatred between that spy and that galley-slave. One was in the other's way. Jean Valjean went to the barricade to revenge himself. He arrived too late. He was probably aware that Javert was a prisoner there. The Corsican Vendetta has penetrated certain lower strata of society, and has become a law with them; it is so simple that it does not astonish souls which are but half turned toward virtue; those hearts are so constituted that a criminal on the path of repentance may be scrupulous in regard to robbery and not in

regard to vengeance. Jean Valjean had killed Javert. At least, that seemed evident.

This was the last question of all, but it admitted of no reply. This question Marius felt like a pair of pincers. How was it that the existence of Jean Valjean had so long elbowed that of Cosette?

What gloomy sport of Providence was that which had brought this man and this child in contact? Are there chains for two forged in heaven, and does God take pleasure in coupling the angel with the demon? Can crime and innocence, then, be room-mates in the mysterious hulks of misery? In that procession of condemned men which is called human destiny may two brows pass along side by side, one ingenuous, the other fearful,— one all bathed in the divine whiteness of dawn, the other eternally branded. Who can have determined that inexplicable pairing off? How, in virtue of what miracle, could any community of life have been established between that celestial child and that old criminal?

Who could have bound the lamb to the wolf, and, more incomprehensible still, the wolf to the lamb? For the wolf loved the lamb,— the fierce creature adored the weak one; and for nine years the angel had leaned on the monster for support.

The childhood and maidenhood of Cosette, her advent in daylight, her virgin growth toward life and light, had been protected by that distorted devotion. Here questions branched out, if we may use the expression, into countless enigmas; abysses yawned at the bottom of abysses, and Marius could no longer bend over Jean Valjean without becoming dizzy. What could this man-precipice be?

The old symbols of Genesis are eternal. In human society, such as it now exists, until the day when greater light shall change it, there are ever two men, one superior, the other subterranean,— the one who holds to good is Abel, the one who holds to evil is Cain. What was this tender Cain? What was this ruffian religiously absorbed in the adoration of a virgin, watching over her, bringing her up, guarding her,

dignifying her, and, though himself impure, surrounding her with purity?

What was this cesspool which had worshipped that innocence so greatly as not to leave a spot upon it? What was this Valjean carrying on the education of Cosette? What was this figure of darkness, whose sole care it was to preserve the rising of a star from every shadow and from every cloud?

That was Jean Valjean's secret; that was also God's secret.

Marius shrank from this double secret. The one to some extent reassured him about the other. God was as visible in this venture as was Jean Valjean. God has his instruments. He uses whatever love he chooses. He is not responsible to man. Do we know how God sets to work? Jean Valjean had laboured over Cosette; he had in some sort formed her soul,— that was incontestable. Well, what then? The workman was horrible, but the work was admirable. God produces his miracles as seems good to him. He had constructed that charming Cosette, and he had employed Jean Valjean. It had pleased him to choose this strange assistant. What account can we require of him? Is it the first time that manure has helped the spring to create the rose?

Marius gave himself these answers, and declared to himself that they were good. He had not dared to press Jean Valjean on all the points which we have indicated, though he did not confess to himself that he dared not. He adored Cosette; he possessed Cosette; Cosette was splendidly pure. That was enough for him. What enlightenment did he require? Cosette was a light. Does light require enlightenment?

He had everything; what more could he desire? Everything,— is not that enough? Jean Valjean's personal affairs in no way concerned him.

And bending over the fatal shadow of that man, he clung to this solemn declaration of the unfortunate wretch: "I am nothing to Cosette. Ten years ago I did not know that she existed."

Jean Valjean was a passer-by. He had said so himself.

Well, he had passed. Whoever he might be, his part was played out.

Henceforth Marius would perform the functions of Providence toward Cosette. She had found in ether her equal, her lover, her husband, her celestial mate. As she soared aloft Cosette, winged and transfigured, left behind her on earth her empty, hideous chrysalis, Jean Valjean.

In whatever circle of ideas Marius might revolve, he always came back to a certain horror of Jean Valjean,— a sacred horror perhaps; for, as we have shown, he felt a *quid divinum* in this man. But do what he would, and seek whatever extenuating circumstances he might, he was always compelled to fall back on this: the man was a convict,— that is to say, a being who has not even a place on the social ladder, being lower than the very lowest rung. After the last of men comes the convict. The convict is no longer, so to speak, made in the likeness of his fellow-men. The law had stripped him of all the humanity of which it can deprive a man.

Marius, in penal matters, democrat though he was, still held to the inexorable system, and he entertained all the ideas of the law about those whom the law strikes. He had not yet made all the progress of which he was capable. He had not yet learned to distinguish between what is written by man and what is written by God,— between law and right. He had not examined and weighed the claim which man sets up to dispose of the irrevocable and the irreparable. He did not revolt at the word "vindictive." He considered it natural that certain breaches of the written law should be followed by eternal penalties, and he accepted social damnation as a civilizing process. He was still at this point, though infallibly certain to advance later on, since his nature was good and, at bottom, wholly made up of latent progress.

In this medium of ideas Jean Valjean appeared to him monstrous and repulsive. He was a reprobate, a convict. This word was to him like the sound of the trumpet on the Day of Judgment; and after studying Jean Valjean for a

long time his final gesture was to turn away his head,— *Vade retro.*

Marius,— we must recognize the fact, and even lay stress on it,— while questioning Jean Valjean to such an extent that Jean Valjean himself said, "You put me to confession," had, however, failed to ask him two or three decisive questions.

It was not that they had not presented themselves to his mind, but he had been afraid of them,— the Jondrette garret, the barricade, Javert. Who knows where the revelations might have stopped? Jean Valjean did not seem a man to shrink from anything; and who knows whether Marius, after urging him on, might not have wished to check him?

Has it not happened to all of us in certain supreme conjunctures to stop our ears after asking a question that we may not hear the answer? A man is especially liable to such acts of cowardice when he is in love. It is not wise to drive sinister situations into a corner, especially when the indissoluble side of our own life is fatally intermixed with them. What fearful light might spring from Jean Valjean's desperate explanations, and who knows whether that hideous glare might not be reflected upon Cosette? Who knows whether a sort of internal gleam might not remain on that angel's brow? The splash from a flash of lightning is also thunder. Fatality knows such partnerships, where innocence itself is branded with crime by the gloomy law of colouring reflections. The purest faces may forever retain the impression of a horrible vicinity. Whether rightly or wrongly, Marius was afraid. He already knew too much. He rather sought to close his ears than to gain further light.

Distractedly he bore Cosette off in his arms, closing his eyes upon Jean Valjean. That man belonged to the night, the living and terrible night. How could he dare to seek the end of it? It is a fearful thing to question the darkness. Who knows what its answer will be? The dawn might be eternally blackened by it.

In this state of mind it was a heartrending perplexity for

Marius to think that this man could henceforth come into any contact with Cosette.

He now almost reproached himself for not having asked those terrible questions from which he had shrunk, and which might have led to an implacable and definite decision. He felt that he had been too kind, too gentle, and, let us say it, too weak. That weakness had led him to make an imprudent concession. He had allowed himself to be moved. He was wrong. He should simply and purely have rejected Jean Valjean. Jean Valjean was like a devouring flame; he should have rid his house of the presence of that man.

He was angry with himself, he was angry with the force of that whirlwind of emotions which had deafened, blinded, and carried him away. He was dissatisfied with himself.

What was he to do now? Jean Valjean's visits were most deeply disagreeable to him. What was the use of letting that man come to his house? What did he want there? Here, he became bewildered. He refused to consider the matter further. He was unwilling to probe his own heart. He had promised, he had allowed himself to be drawn into a promise; Jean Valjean had his promise; he must keep his word even to a convict,— above all to a convict. Still, his first duty was to Cosette. In brief, an overpowering aversion took possession of him.

Marius confusedly revolved all these ideas in his mind, passing from one to the other, and shaken by all. Hence arose a deep trouble.

It was not easy to hide this trouble from Cosette; but love is a talent, and Marius succeeded in doing it.

However, without any apparent motive, he put a few questions to Cosette, who was as candid as a dove is white, and suspected nothing; he talked with her of her childhood and her youth, and he became more and more convinced that that convict had been to Cosette as good, paternal, and respectful as a man can be. All that Marius had dimly seen and surmised was real,— that sinister nettle had loved and protected that lily.

BOOK VIII

THE TWILIGHT DECLINE

CHAPTER I

THE GROUND-FLOOR ROOM

ON the morrow, at night-fall, Jean Valjean tapped at the carriage entrance of the Gillenormand mansion. It was Basque who received him. Basque was in the court-yard at the appointed time, as if he had had his orders. It sometimes happens that people say to a servant: "You will watch for Mr. So-and-so's arrival."

Basque, without waiting for Jean Valjean to approach him, said: —

"The Baron ordered me to ask you, sir, whether you wish to go upstairs or wait below."

"I will wait below," replied Jean Valjean.

Basque, whose manner, moreover, was perfectly respectful, opened the door of the lower room, and said: "I will go and tell my mistress."

The room which Jean Valjean entered was a damp, arched, basement-room, sometimes used as a store-room, looking out on the street, with a flooring of red tiles, and badly lighted by an iron-barred window.

This room was not one of those which are harassed by the broom, the feather-duster, and the pope's-head brush. The dust was left in peace. No persecution of the spiders had been set on foot. A fine web, spreading far and wide, quite black, and adorned with dead flies, formed a wheel on one of the window panes. The room, which was small and low, was

furnished with a pile of empty bottles heaped in one corner. The wall, daubed with a yellow-ochre wash, was scaling off in large patches. At one end was a wooden mantelpiece painted black, with a narrow shelf. A fire was lighted in it, which showed that Jean Valjean's reply, "Wait below," had been calculated on.

Two arm-chairs were placed, one at each side of the hearth. Between the chairs was spread, in lieu of carpet, an old bedroom rug, which was almost threadbare.

The room was lighted by the flickering of the fire and the twilight through the window.

Jean Valjean was very tired. For several days he had not eaten or slept. He sank into one of the arm-chairs.

Basque returned, placed a lighted candle on the mantelpiece, and withdrew. Jean Valjean, whose head was bent low, his chin resting on his breast, did not notice either Basque or the candle.

All at once, he started up. Cosette was behind him.

He had not seen her enter, but he felt that she was there.

He turned and gazed at her. She was adorably lovely. But what he studied with that profound gaze was not her beauty, but her soul.

"Well, father," exclaimed Cosette, "I knew that you were peculiar but I should never have expected this. What an idea! Marius told me that it was your wish to see me here."

"Yes, it is."

"I expected that answer. Very well. I warn you that I am going to have a scene with you. Let us begin at the beginning. Kiss me, father."

And she offered her cheek.

Jean Valjean did not move.

"You do not stir. I mark the fact! It is the attitude of a culprit. But I do not care; I forgive you. Christ said, 'Offer the other cheek;' here it is."

And she offered the other cheek.

Jean Valjean did not stir. It seemed as if his feet were riveted to the floor.

"This is getting serious," said Cosette. "What have I done to you? I own I am at a loss. You must make it up with me. You will dine with us."

"I have dined."

"That is not true. I will get M. Gillenormand to scold you. Grandfathers are made to lay down the law to fathers. Come. Come upstairs with me to the drawing-room. At once."

"Impossible."

Here Cosette lost a little ground. She ceased to command and began to question.

"But why? And you choose the ugliest room in the house to see me in. It is horrible here."

"You know,"— Jean Valjean broke off,—"you know, madame, that I am peculiar; I have my whims."

Cosette clapped her little hands.

"Madame! — *you* know! — more novelties! What does all this mean?"

Jean Valjean bent upon her that heartrending smile to which he sometimes had recourse: —

"You wanted to be 'Madame.' You have your wish."

"Not for you, father."

"Do not call me 'father.'"

"What?"

"Call me Monsieur Jean,— Jean, if you like."

"You are no longer my father? I am no longer Cosette? Monsieur Jean? Why, what does this mean? Why, these are sudden changes, are they not? What has happened? Look me in the face, if you can. And you will not live with us, and you will not have my room! What have I done to you? Oh, what have I done? Has anything happened?"

"Nothing."

"Well, then?"

"All is as usual."

"Why do you change your name?"

"You have changed yours."

He again smiled that same smile, and added: —

"Since you are Madame Pontmercy, I may surely be Monsieur Jean."

"I do not understand anything. All this is idiotic. I will ask my husband's leave for you to be Monsieur Jean. I hope that he will not consent. You make me very unhappy. You may have whims, but you have no right to grieve your little Cosette. That is wrong. You have no right to be naughty, you who are so good."

He made no reply.

She seized both of his hands eagerly, and with an irresistible movement, raising them to her face, she pressed them against her neck under her chin, which is a sign of profound affection.

"Oh," she said, "be good to me."

And she continued: —

"This is what I call being good: to be nice to come and live here,— there are birds here as well as in the Rue Plumet, — to live with us, leave that hole in the Rue de l'Homme Armé, give us no more riddles to guess, to be like everybody else, dine with us, breakfast with us, and be my father."

He removed her hands: —

"You no longer need a father, you have a husband."

Cosette lost her temper: —

"I no longer need a father! Things like that have no common-sense! I really don't know what to say."

"If Toussaint were here," continued Jean Valjean, like a man driven to seek authorities, and clinging to every branch, "she would be the first to allow that I have always had strange ways of my own. It is nothing new; I always loved my dark corner."

"But it is cold here. I cannot see distinctly. It is abominable for you to want to be Monsieur Jean. I will not allow you to call me 'madame.'"

"As I was coming along just now," replied Jean Valjean, "I say a very pretty piece of furniture in the Rue St. Louis, at a cabinet-maker's. If I were a pretty woman, I should treat myself to that piece of furniture. It is a very

nice toilet-table, in the present fashion. Made of rosewood, I think you call it, and inlaid. It has quite a large glass, and drawers. It is very pretty."

"Oh, you ugly bear!" replied Cosette.

And with supreme grace, setting her teeth, and parting her lips, she blew at Jean Valjean. It was a Grace copying a cat.

"I am furious," she went on. "Ever since yesterday you have made me mad, all of you. I am very cross. I do not understand. You do not defend me against Marius; Marius will not take my part against you,— I am all alone. I have prepared a nice room. If I could have put the God in it, I would have done so. My room is left on my hands. My lodger sends me into bankruptcy. I order Nicolette to prepare a nice little dinner,—'They will not touch your dinner, madame.' And my father Fauchelevent wants me to call him Monsieur Jean, and to receive him in a frightful, old, ugly, mildewed cellar, where the walls wear a beard, and where empty bottles represent the looking-glasses, and spiders' webs the curtains! I admit that you are a queer man,— it is your way; but a truce is always granted to newly married people.

"You ought not to have begun to be queer again so soon. You are going to be quite contented, then, in your horrible Rue de l'Homme Armé? Well, I was very wretched there! What have I done to offend you? You make me very unhappy. Fie!"

And growing suddenly serious, she looked intently at Jean Valjean, and added: —

"You are angry with me for being happy, is that it?"

Simplicity sometimes unconsciously penetrates deep. This question, natural for Cosette, was cruel for Jean Valjean. Cosette meant to scratch,— she tore.

Jean Valjean turned pale.

For a moment he did not answer, then he murmured in an indescribable tone, and speaking to himself: —

"Her happiness was the object of my life. Now God

may sign my discharge. Cosette, thou art happy, and my course is run."

"Ah! you said *thou* to me," exclaimed Cosette.

And she sprang into his arms.

Jean Valjean wildly strained her to his heart. It almost seemed as if he were taking her back.

"Thank you, father," said Cosette.

His emotion was getting too painful for Jean Valjean. He gently withdrew from Cosette's arms, and took up his hat.

"Well?" said Cosette.

Jean Valjean replied: —

"I will leave you, madame; you will be missed."

And on the threshold he added: —

"I said *thou* to you. Tell your husband that it shall not happen again. Forgive me."

Jean Valjean took his departure, leaving Cosette stunned by this enigmatical leave-taking.

CHAPTER II

ANOTHER BACKWARD STEP

NEXT day Jean Valjean came at the same hour.

Cosette asked him no questions, was no longer astonished, no longer exclaimed that she was cold, no longer alluded to the drawing-room; she avoided saying either father or Monsieur Jean. She allowed herself to be called madame. Only her delight was lessened. She would have been sad, had sorrow been possible to her.

It is probable that she had held with Marius one of those conversations in which the beloved man says what he pleases, explains nothing, and satisfies the beloved woman. The curiosity of lovers does not extend very far beyond their love.

The basement-room had been furbished up a little. Basque had suppressed the bottles, and Nicolette the spiders.

Every day which followed brought Jean Valjean back at the same hour. He came daily, as he had not the strength to take Marius's words otherwise than literally. Marius arranged to be absent at the hours when Jean Valjean came. The house grew accustomed to M. Fauchelevent's novel ways. Toussaint helped,—"my master was always so," she repeated. The grandfather issued this decree: "He is an original," and everything was said. Moreover, at the age of ninety, no new friendships are possible; everything is mere juxtaposition; a new-comer is in the way. There is no room for him; habits are unalterably formed. As for M. Fauchelevent M. Tranchelevent, Father Gillenormand desired nothing better than to get rid of "that gentleman." He added: "Nothing is more common than such originals. They do all sorts of strange things without any motive. The Marquis de Canoples did worse, for he bought a palace in order to live in the garret. Some people like to pass for oddities."

No one caught a glimpse of the sinister reality. Moreover, who could have guessed at such a thing? There are marches like this in India; the water seems extraordinary, inexplicable, rippling when there is no breeze, and agitated when it should be calm. People see this causeless ebullition on the surface; they do not suspect the hydra crawling at the bottom.

Many men have in this way a secret monster, an evil which they feed, a dragon that gnaws them, a despair that dwells in their night. Such a man looks like other men; he comes and goes. No one knows that there is within him a frightful parasitic pain with a thousand teeth which dwells in that wretch and destroys him. They do not know that that man is a gulf. He is stagnant but deep. From time to time a commotion which no one understands appears on his surface. A mysterious ripple forms, then fades away, then reappears; a bubble of air rises and bursts. It is a slight thing, but it is terrible. It is the breathing of the unknown beast.

Certain strange habits, such as arriving at the hour when others go away; hiding when others display themselves; wearing on all occasions what may be called a mantle of darkness; seeking the solitary walk; preferring the deserted street; never mixing in conversation; avoiding crowds and festivities; appearing to be comfortably off and living poorly; having, rich though one be, one's key in one's pocket, and one's candle in the porter's lodge; entering by the side door, and going up the back stairs,— all these insignificant peculiarities, ripples, air-bubbles, and fugitive marks on the surface, frequently come from a fearful depth below.

Several weeks passed thus. A new life gradually took possession of Cosette,— the relations which marriage creates, visits the management of the household, and pleasures, those important affairs. Cosette's pleasures were not costly; they consisted in one thing only: being with Marius. To go out with him, to be with him, was the great occupation of her life. It was for them an ever-novel joy to go out arm in arm, in the full sunshine, in the open streets, without hiding themselves, in the face of everybody, both alone.

Cosette had one vexation,— Toussaint could not agree with Nicolette; the welding of the two old maids was quite impossible, and Toussaint left. The grandfather was well; Marius had a few briefs now and then; Aunt Gillenormand peacefully lived with the married pair that side life which sufficed for her. Jean Valjean came every day.

The terms "Madame" and "Monsieur Jean," however, made him a wholly different person to Cosette. The care he had himself taken to wean her from him was successful. She was more and more gay, and less and less affectionate. Yet she loved him dearly still, and he felt it.

One day she said to him suddenly: "You were my father, you are no longer my father; you were my uncle, you are no longer my uncle; you were Monsieur Fauchelevent, you are Jean. Who are you, then? I do not like all this. If I did not know you to be so good, I should be afraid of you."

He still lived in the Rue de l'Homme Armé, as he could

not make up his mind to move from the district where Cosette lived.

At first he only stayed a few minutes with Cosette, and then went away.

By degrees he fell into the habit of making his visits longer. It seemed as if he took advantage of the lengthening days; he came earlier and went away later.

One day, the word "father," slipped from Cosette's lips. A gleam of joy lit up Jean Valjean's melancholy old face, but he chided her: "Say Jean."

"Oh, to be sure!" she replied, with a burst of laughter, "Monsieur Jean."

"That is right," said he. And he turned away that she might not see the tears in his eyes.

CHAPTER III

THEY REMEMBER THE GARDEN IN THE RUE PLUMET

THAT was the last time. After that last flash of light, total extinction took place. There was no more familiarity, no more good-morning with a kiss, and never again that word so deeply tender: "Father!" He was at his own request, and with his own complicity, expelled from all his joys in succession; and he underwent this misery, that, after losing Cosette wholly in a single day, he was then obliged to lose her again bit by bit.

The eye finally grows accustomed to the light of a cellar. In short, he found it enough to have a glimpse of Cosette once a day. His whole life was concentrated in that one hour.

He sat down by her, he gazed at her in silence, or else he talked to her of former years, her childhood, the convent, and her little friends of those days.

One afternoon,— it was one of the first days in April, al-

ready warm but still fresh, the moment of the sun's great gayety, the gardens that surrounded the windows of Marius and Cosette were rousing from their slumber, the hawthorn was just budding, a jewelled adornment of wall-flowers was displayed on the old walls, snapdragons gaped in the crevices between the stones, there was a fairy carpet of daisies and buttercups on the grass, the white butterflies were making their first appearance, and the wind, that minstrel of the eternal wedding-feast, was trying in the trees the first notes of that great auroral symphony which the old poets called the "renewal," (*le renouveau*),— Marius said to Cosette: "We said that we would go back and look at our garden in the Rue Plumet. Come. We must not be ungrateful." And they flew off like two swallows toward the spring. That garden in the Rue Plumet produced on them the effect of dawn. They already had behind them in life something that was like the springtime of their love. The house in the Rue Plumet, being held on a lease, still belonged to Cosette. They visited that garden and that house. There they found themselves again, and there they forgot themselves. In the evening, at the usual hour, Jean Valjean went to the Rue des Filles du Calvaire. "Mistress went out with master," said Basque, "and has not yet returned." He sat down silently, and waited an hour. Cosette did not return. He hung his head and went away.

Cosette was so intoxicated by the walk in "their garden," and so pleased at having "lived a whole day in her past," that she spoke of nothing else the next day. She did not remember that she had not seen Jean Valjean.

"How did you go there?" asked Jean Valjean.

"On foot."

"And how did you return?"

"In a cab."

For some time Jean Valjean had noticed the economical life which the young couple led. It troubled him. Marius's economy was severe, and that word had its absolute meaning with Jean Valjean. He hazarded a question:—

"Why don't you keep a carriage of your own? A pretty coupé would not cost you more than five hundred francs a month. You are rich."

"I don't know," answered Cosette.

"It is like Toussaint," continued Jean Valjean. "She has left. You have engaged no one in her place. Why not?"

"Nicolette is sufficient."

"But you ought to have a lady's-maid."

"Have I not Marius?"

"You ought to have a house of your own, servants of your own, a carriage, and a box at the opera. Nothing is too good for you. Why not take advantage of your riches? Wealth adds to happiness."

Cosette made no reply.

Jean Valjean's visits did not grow shorter,— far from it. When it is the heart that is slipping, we do not stop on the downward slope.

When Jean Valjean wished to prolong his visit and to make Cosette forget the hour, he sang the praises of Marius; he pronounced him handsome, noble, brave, witty, eloquent, and good. Cosette outdid him. Jean Valjean began again. They were never weary. MARIUS, that word was inexhaustible; there were volumes in those six letters. In this way Jean Valjean managed to stay a long time.

It was so sweet to see Cosette, to forget at her side! It healed his wounds. Basque often had to come twice to announce: "M. Gillenormand has sent me to remind the Baroness that dinner is waiting."

On those days Jean Valjean would return home very thoughtful.

Was there, then, any truth in that comparison of the chrysalis which had occurred to Marius's mind? Was Jean Valjean really an obstinate chrysalis, constantly paying visits to his butterfly?

One day he remained even longer than usual. The next day he noticed that there was no fire in the grate. "Hullo!" he thought. "No fire." And he explained it to himself

thus: "It is quite natural; it is April now. The cold weather is over."

"Good gracious, how cold it is here!" exclaimed Cosette, as she came in.

"Oh, no," said Jean Valjean.

"Then it was you who told Basque not to light a fire?"

"Yes, it will be May directly."

"But we have fires into June. In this cellar of a place there ought to be one all the year round."

"I thought it was unnecessary."

"That is just like one of your ideas," remarked Cosette.

The next day, there was a fire; but the two chairs were arranged on the other side of the door. "What is the meaning of that?" thought Jean Valjean.

He fetched the chairs and restored them to their usual place near the fire.

This rekindled fire, however, encouraged him. He made the conversation last even longer than usual. As he rose to leave, Cosette remarked to him: —

"My husband said a funny thing to me yesterday."

"What was it?"

"He said to me, 'Cosette, we have thirty thousand francs a year,— twenty-seven of yours, and three that my grandfather allows me.' I replied, 'That makes thirty.' He continued: 'Would you have the courage to live on the three thousand?' I answered, 'Yes, on nothing, provided that it be with you.' And then I asked him: 'Why do you ask me?' He replied: 'I only wanted to know.'"

Jean Valjean had not a word to say. Cosette probably expected some explanation, from him; he listened to her in sullen silence.

He returned to the Rue de l'Homme Armé; he was so profoundly abstracted that, instead of entering his own house, he went into the next one. It was not until he had gone up nearly two flights of stairs that he noticed his mistake, and came down again.

His mind was filled full with conjectures. It was evident

that Marius entertained doubts as to the origin of the six hundred thousand francs, that he feared some impure source; he might even — who knew? — have discovered that this money came from him, Jean Valjean; that he hesitated to touch this suspicious fortune, and was loath to use it as his own, preferring that Cosette and he should remain poor, rather than to be rich with dubious wealth.

Moreover, Jean Valjean was beginning to feel that he was being shown the door.

On the following day, he had a sort of shock on entering the basement-room. The arm-chairs had disappeared. There was not a seat of any sort.

"Dear me, no chairs!" exclaimed Cosette, as she entered. "Where are the chairs?"

"They are gone," replied Jean Valjean.

"That is rather too much!"

Jean Valjean stammered: —

"I told Basque to take them away."

"For what reason?"

"I shall only stay a few minutes to-day."

"Few or many, that is no reason for standing."

"I believe that Basque required the chairs for the drawing-room."

"Why?"

"You have company this evening, no doubt."

"Not a soul."

Jean Valjean had not another word to say.

Cosette shrugged her shoulders.

"To have the chairs taken away! The other day you ordered the fire to be put out! How queer you are!"

"Good-bye," murmured Jean Valjean.

He did not say, "Good-bye, Cosette," but he had not the strength to say, "Good-bye, madame."

He went away, overwhelmed.

This time he understood.

The next day he did not come. Cosette did not notice this until evening.

"Dear me," said she, "Monsieur Jean did not come to-day."

She felt a slight pang, but she scarcely noticed it, for her attention was at once diverted by a kiss from Marius.

The next day he did not come either.

Cosette paid no heed to this, spent the evening, and slept at night as usual, and only thought of it when she woke. She was so happy! She very soon sent Nicolette to Monsieur Jean's house to ask whether he were ill, and why he had not come to see her on the previous day. Nicolette brought back Monsieur Jean's answer. "He was not ill. He was busy. He would come soon,— as soon as he could; but he was going to take a little journey. Madame would remember that he was accustomed to take trips every now and then. She need not feel at all alarmed or trouble herself about him."

Nicolette, on entering Monsieur Jean's room, had repeated to him her mistress's exact words. "Madame sent to know 'why Monsieur Jean had not called on the previous day.'" "I have not called for two days," said Jean Valjean, quietly.

But this remark escaped Nicolette's notice, and she did not repeat it to Cosette.

CHAPTER IV

ATTRACTION AND EXTINCTION

DURING the last months of spring and the early months of the summer of 1833 the few passers-by in the Marais, the shopkeepers, and the idlers in the doorways, noticed an old man, decently dressed in black, who every day, about the same hour, at nightfall, left the Rue de l'Homme Armé, went toward the Rue Sainte Croix de la Bretonnerie, passed in front of the Blancs Manteaux, reached the Rue Culture-St.-Catherine, and on coming to the Rue de l'Echarpe turned to his left and entered the Rue St. Louis.

There he walked slowly, with head stretched forward, seeing nothing, hearing nothing, with his eye steadily fixed on one spot, always the same, which seemed to be his magnet, and which was no other than the corner of the Rue des Filles du Calvaire. The nearer he came to this corner the more brightly his eyes flashed, a sort of joy illumined them like an inward dawn; he had a fascinated and affectionate look, his lips made obscure movements as if he were talking to some one whom he did not see, he smiled vaguely, and he advanced as slowly as he could. It seemed as if, while anxious to reach the goal, he yet dreaded the moment when he should be quite close to it. When he had only a few houses between himself and that street which seemed to attract him, his step became so slow that at moments he seemed not to move at all. The vacillation of his head and the fixity of his eye suggested the needle seeking the pole. However much he might delay the time of his arrival, he must needs arrive at last. He reached the corner of the Rue des Filles du Calvaire; then he trembled, thrust his head with a sort of mournful timidity round the corner of the last house and looked into that street, and there was in that tragic gaze something that resembled the dazzling light of the impossible and the reflection from a paradise which was closed to him. Then a tear, which had gradually gathered in his eye, having grown large enough to fall, trickled down his cheek, and sometimes stopped at his mouth. The old man tasted its bitter flavour. He stood thus for some minutes as if made of stone, then he returned by the same road at the same pace; and the farther he got, the more lustreless his eye became.

By degrees this old man ceased to go as far as the corner of the Rue des Filles du Calvaire; he stopped half-way in the Rue St. Louis,— sometimes a little farther off, sometimes a little nearer.

One day he halted at the corner of the Rue Culture-St.-Catherine, and gazed at the Rue des Filles du Calvaire from a distance. Then he silently shook his head, as if refusing himself something, and turned back.

Soon he did not even get as far as the Rue St. Louis. He went to the Rue Pavée, shook his head, and turned back; then he went no farther than the Rue des Trois Pavillons; and then he did not pass the Blancs Manteaux. He seemed like a clock which had run down, whose pendulum moves slower and slower till it stops.

Every day he left his house at the same hour, undertook the same trip, but he no longer accomplished it; and, though perhaps unconscious of the fact, he constantly shortened it. His whole countenance expressed this one idea: What is the use? His eyes were dim; there was no light in them. His tears were also dried up; they no longer gathered in the corner of his lids; that pensive eye was dry. The old man's head was still thrust forward; his chin moved at times; and the wrinkles in his thin neck were painful to behold. Sometimes, when the weather was bad, he had an umbrella under his arm, but he never opened it.

The good women of the district said: "He is a simpleton," and the children followed him with shouts of laughter.

BOOK IX

SUPREME DARKNESS, SUPREME DAWN

CHAPTER I

PITY THE UNHAPPY, BUT BE INDULGENT TO THE HAPPY

IT is a terrible thing to be happy! How satisfied people are! How all-sufficient they find it! How, when possessed of the false object of life, happiness, they forget the true object, duty!

We must admit, however, that it would be unjust to reproach Marius.

Marius, as we have explained, before his marriage asked no questions of M. Fauchelevent, and since then he had been afraid to ask any of Jean Valjean. He had regretted the promise which he had allowed to be drawn from him. He had repeatedly said to himself that he had done wrong in making that concession to despair. He had confined himself to gradually turning Jean Valjean out of his house, and to effacing him as far as possible from Cosette's mind. He had, in some sort, always placed himself between Cosette and Jean Valjean, feeling certain that in this way she would not see him or think of him. It was more than effacement; it was an eclipse.

Marius did what he considered necessary and just. He thought that he had serious reasons, which we have already seen, and others which we have yet to see, for getting rid of Jean Valjean, without harshness, but without weakness.

Chance having made him acquainted, in a case which he had argued, with a former clerk of Lafitte's bank, he had obtained without seeking it mysterious information, which he had not been able, it is true, to examine fully, out of respect for the secret he had promised to keep, and out of regard for Jean Valjean's perilous situation. He believed at this very moment that he had a serious duty to perform,—the restitution of the six hundred thousand francs to some one whom he was seeking as discreetly as he could. Meantime, he abstained from touching that money.

As for Cosette, she was not acquainted with any of these secrets; but it would be harsh to condemn her either.

Between Marius and her there existed an all-powerful magnetism, which made her do, instinctively and almost mechanically, whatever Marius wished. She was conscious of Marius's wish in the matter of Monsieur Jean; she conformed to it. Her husband was not obliged to say anything to her; she yielded to the vague but clear pressure of his tacit intentions, and obeyed blindly. Her obedience in this case consisted in not remembering what Marius forgot. It was no effort for her to do so. Without her knowing why, and without any ground for blame, her mind had become so wholly that of her husband that whatever was covered with a shadow in Marius's thoughts became obscured in hers.

Let us not go too far, however; as regards Jean Valjean, this effacement and this forgetfulness were only superficial. She was thoughtless rather than forgetful. In her heart she truly loved the man whom she had so long called her father; but she loved her husband more. It was this that had slightly disturbed the balance of her heart, which weighed down on one side only.

It sometimes happened that Cosette would speak of Jean Valjean, and express her surprise. Then Marius would calm her: "He is away, I think. Did he not say that he was going on a journey?" "That is true," thought Cosette; "he had a habit of disappearing, but not for so long a time." Twice or thrice she sent Nicolette to inquire in the

Rue de l'Homme Armé whether Monsieur Jean had returned from his journey. Jean Valjean sent answer in the negative.

Cosette asked no more, as she had but one want on earth,—Marius.

Let us also say that Marius and Cosette had been absent too. They went to Vernon. Marius took Cosette to his father's grave. Marius had gradually won Cosette away from Jean Valjean. Cosette had allowed it.

However, what is called, much too harshly in certain cases, the ingratitude of children is not always so reprehensible a thing as is supposed. It is the ingratitude of nature. Nature, as we have said elsewhere, "looks before her." Nature divides living beings into arrivals and departures. Those who are departing turn toward the darkness, those who are arriving toward the light; hence a breach which on the part of the old is fatal, on the part of the young is involuntary. This breach, at first insensible, increases slowly, like every separation of branches. The boughs grow away from the parent stem without detaching themselves from it. It is not their fault. Youth goes where there is joy; it seeks festivals, bright light, and love. Old age advances toward the end. They do not lose sight of each other, but there is no longer a close embrace. Young people feel the chill of life, old people that of the tomb. Let us not reproach these poor children.

CHAPTER II

THE LAST FLICKERINGS OF THE LAMP WITHOUT OIL

ONE day Jean Valjean went down his staircase, took three steps in the street, seated himself upon a stone post, the same one on which Gavroche had found him musing on the night of June 5; he stayed there a few minutes, and then went up again. This was the last swing of the pendulum.

Next day he did not leave his room; the day after that he did not leave his bed.

The porter's wife, who prepared his scanty meals for him, — some cabbage or a few potatoes and a little bacon,— looked at the brown earthenware plate and exclaimed: —

"Why, poor, dear man, you ate nothing yesterday!"

"Yes I did," answered Jean Valjean.

"The plate is quite full."

"Look at the water-jug. It is empty."

"That proves that you have drunk; it does not prove that you have eaten."

"Well," said Jean Valjean, "suppose that I only felt hungry for water?"

"That is called thirst; and if a man does not eat at the same time, it is called fever."

"I will eat to-morrow."

"Or on Trinity Sunday. Why not to-day? Whoever thought of saying, 'I will eat to-morrow'? The idea of leaving my dish without touching it! My lady's finger potatoes were so good!"

Jean Valjean took the old woman's hand.

"I promise you to eat them," he said, in his gentle voice.

"I am not pleased with you," replied the woman.

Jean Valjean never saw any other human creature but this good woman. There are streets in Paris through which people never pass, and houses which people never enter. He lived in one of those streets and one of those houses.

During the time when he still went out, he had bought of a coppersmith, for a few sous, a small copper crucifix, which he hung on a nail opposite his bed. That gibbet is always good to look on.

A week passed thus, and Jean Valjean still remained in bed. The porter's wife said to her husband: "The old fellow upstairs does not get up, he does not eat, he will not last long. That man has some sorrow, I know he has. No one will get it out of my head that his daughter has not made a bad match."

The porter replied, with the accent of marital supremacy: —

"If he is rich, let him call a doctor. If he is not rich, let him do without. If he has no doctor, he will die."

"And if he has one?"

"He will die," said the porter.

The porter's wife began to scrape away the grass from what she called her pavement, with an old knife; and as she pulled up the grass she grumbled: —

"It's a pity,— such a nice old man. He is as white as a spring chicken."

She saw a doctor who lived in the district passing at the foot of the street, and took it upon herself to ask him to go up.

"It's on the second floor," said she. "You can go right in. As the old fellow no longer leaves his bed, the key is always in the lock."

The doctor saw Jean Valjean and spoke with him.

When he came down again, the porter's wife was waiting for him: —

"Well, doctor?"

"He is very ill."

"What is the matter with him?"

"Everything and nothing. He is a man who, to all appearances, has lost some one whom he loved. People die of that."

"What did he say to you?"

"He told me that he was quite well."

"Will you call again, doctor?"

"Yes," replied the doctor. "But some one else must come too."

CHAPTER III

A PEN IS TOO HEAVY FOR HIM WHO LIFTED FAUCHELEVENT'S CART

ONE evening Jean Valjean found it hard to raise himself on his elbow; he felt his wrist, but could not find his pulse; his breathing was short, and stopped every now and then; he saw that he was weaker than he had ever been before. Then, doubtless under the pressure of some supreme preoccupation, he made an effort, sat up, and dressed himself. He put on his old workman's clothes. As he no longer went out, he had returned to them, and preferred them. He was compelled to pause several times while dressing himself; the perspiration poured off his forehead merely from the effort of putting his arms into his sleeves.

Since he had been alone, he had placed his bed in the anteroom, so as to occupy as little as possible of the deserted apartments.

He opened the valise and took out Cosette's clothes.

He spread them on his bed.

The bishop's candlesticks were in their place on the mantelpiece. He took two wax candles from a drawer and put them in the candlesticks. Then, although it was broad daylight,— it was summer,— he lit them. We sometimes see candles lighted thus in broad daylight in rooms where dead men are lying.

Every step that he took in going from one piece of furniture to another exhausted him, and he was obliged to sit down. It was not ordinary fatigue, which uses up the strength only to renew it; it was the remnant of possible motion; it was exhausted life drained drop by drop in tremendous efforts which will never be repeated.

One of the chairs on which he sank stood near the mirror, so fatal to him, so providential to Marius, in which he had

read Cosette's reversed writing on the blotting-book. He saw himself in that mirror, and did not know himself. He was eighty years old; before Marius's marriage he had looked scarcely fifty; this last year counted for thirty. What he bore on his brow was no longer the wrinkles of age, it was the mysterious mark of death. The dents of that pitiless nail could be traced there. His cheeks were flaccid; the skin of his face had that colour which leads to the belief that there is already earth on it; the corners of his mouth drooped as in that mask which the ancients sculptured on tombs; he gazed into space reproachfully; he resembled one of those grand tragic beings who have cause to complain of some one.

He had reached that stage, the last phase of dejection, in which grief no longer flows; it is, so to speak, coagulated; there is something on the soul like a clot of despair.

Night had set in. He laboriously dragged a table and the old easy-chair to the fireside, and laid on the table pen, ink, and paper.

This done, he fainted away. When he regained his senses, he was thirsty.

As he could not lift the water-jug, he tipped it to his lips with an effort, and drank a mouthful.

Then he turned to the bed, and still seated, for he was unable to stand, he gazed at the little black dress and all those loved objects.

Such contemplations last for hours, which appear minutes.

All at once he shuddered; he felt that the cold had struck him. He leaned his elbows on the table which was lighted by the bishop's candlesticks, and took up the pen.

As neither the pen nor the ink had been used for a long time, the nib of the pen was bent, the ink had dried up; he was, therefore, obliged to rise and add a few drops of water to the ink, which he did not do without stopping and sitting down two or three times, and he was forced to write with the back of the pen. He wiped his forehead from time to time.

His hand trembled as he slowly wrote the following lines: —

"Cosette, I bless you. I will now explain to you. Your husband was right to make me understand that I ought to go away; still, he was slightly mistaken in his belief, but he was right. He is a worthy man. Love him as much as ever when I am gone. Monsieur Pontmercy, always love my beloved child. Cosette, this paper will be found; this is what I want to say to you; you shall see the figures, if I have the strength to recall them; but listen to me: the money is really yours. This is the whole affair: white jet comes from Norway, black jet comes from England, and black glass beads come from Germany. Jet is lighter, more valuable, and dearer. Imitations can be made in France as well as in Germany. You only need a small anvil, two inches square, and a spirit-lamp to soften the wax. The wax used to be made with resin and lamp-black, and cost four francs the pound. I hit on the idea of making it of shellac and turpentine. It only costs thirty sous, and is much better. Buckles are made of violet glass fastened by means of this wax to a small black iron wire. The glass must be violet for iron ornaments and black for gilt ornaments. Spain buys large quantities. It is the country of jet—"

Here he stopped short, the pen slipped from his fingers, and he gave way to one of those despairing sobs which sometimes welled up from the very depths of his being; the poor man took his head between his hands and pondered.

"Oh!" he exclaimed mentally (lamentable cries, heard by God alone), "all is over. I shall never see her again. She is a smile which flashed across me. I am about to plunge into the night without even seeing her again. Oh, for one moment, for one instant, to hear her voice, to touch her gown, to see her,— her, the angel,— and then to die! Death is nothing; the frightful thing is to die without seeing her. She would smile on me, she would say a word to me; would that do any one any harm? No; all is over, forever. I am all alone. My God! my God! I shall see her no more."

At this moment there was a knock at his door.

CHAPTER IV

A BOTTLE OF INK WHICH ONLY WHITENS

THAT same day, or, to speak more correctly, that same evening, as Marius left the dinner-table and was withdrawing to his study, as he had a brief to get up, Basque handed him a letter, saying, "The person who wrote the letter is in the anteroom."

Cosette had taken her grandfather's arm, and was strolling round the garden.

A letter, like a man, may have an unprepossessing appearance. The mere sight of coarse paper, clumsily folded, is displeasing.

The letter which Basque brought was of that description.

Marius took it. It smelled of tobacco. Nothing arouses recollection so much as a smell. Marius recognized that tobacco. He looked at the address: "*To Baron Pommerci, At his house.*" The recognition of the tobacco led him to recognize the handwriting as well. We may say that astonishment has its lightning flashes.

Marius was, as it were, illuminated by one of these flashes. The sense of smell, that mysterious aid to memory, had revived a whole world within him. It was indeed the paper, the mode of folding, the pale ink; it was indeed the well-known handwriting, and, above all, it was the tobacco.

The Jondrette garret rose before him.

Thus — strange freak of fate! — one of the two trails which he had so long sought, the one for which he had latterly made so many efforts and which he believed forever lost, offered itself voluntarily to him.

He eagerly broke the seal and read: —

BARON,— If the Supreme Being had endowed me with the necessary talent, I might have been Baron Thénard, member of the Institute (academy of cienses), but I am not. I merely bear the same name,

and shall be happy if this reminisence recommends me to the excellense of your kindness. The benefits with which you may honour me will be reciprocal. I am in possession of a secret conserning an individual. This individual conserns you. I hold the secret at your disposal, as I desire to have the honour of being huseful to you. I will give you the simple means for expeling from your honourable family this individual who has no right in it, the Barroness being of high birth. The sanctuary of virtue cannot longer coabit with crime without abdicating.

I await in the anteroom the orders of the Baron.

Respectfully.

The letter was signed "THÉNARD."

This signature was not false. It was only slightly abridged.

However, the bombast and the bad spelling completed the revelation. The certificate of origin was perfect. No doubt was possible.

Marius's emotion was profound. After his first feeling of surprise, he had a feeling of happiness. Let him now find the other man he sought, the man who had saved him, Marius, and he would have nothing more to desire.

He opened a drawer in his bureau, took out several bank-notes, put them in his pocket, closed the bureau again, and rang. Basque half opened the door.

"Show the man in," said Marius.

Basque announced: —

"M. Thénard."

A man entered.

A fresh surprise for Marius. The man he now saw was an utter stranger to him.

This man, who was old, by the way, had a large nose, his chin muffled in his cravat, green spectacles, with a double shade of green silk over his eyes, and his hair smoothed down and plastered on his forehead on a line with his eyebrows, like the wig of an English coachman in "high life." His hair was gray. He was dressed in black from head to foot,— a very seedy but decent black; a bunch of seals, hanging from his fob, led to the supposition that he had a watch. He held an old hat in his hand. He walked bent, and the curve in his spine added to the depth of his bow.

The most noticeable thing, at the first glance, was that this person's coat, too large, though carefully buttoned, had not been made for him.

A short digression is necessary here.

There was in Paris at that period, in a dingy old house in the Rue Beautreillis, near the Arsenal, an ingenious Jew whose trade it was to convert a rogue into an honest man,— not for too long a period, as that might have been embarrassing to the rogue. The change was effected on sight, for one day or two, at the rate of thirty sous a day, by means of a costume resembling, as closely as possible, every-day honesty. This letter-out of costumes was called the "Lightning Change Artist." Parisian pick-pockets had given him that name, and knew him by no other. He had a tolerably complete wardrobe. The rags in which he rigged people out were almost possible. He had specialties and categories; from each nail in his shop hung a social condition, worn and threadbare,— here the magistrate's coat, there the priest's cassock and the banker's coat; in one corner the coat of an officer on half-pay, elsewhere the coat of a man of letters, and farther on the statesman's coat.

This creature was the costumer of the immense drama which rascality plays in Paris. His den was the green-room from which robbery emerged and whither swindling retreated. A ragged knave came to this dressing-room, laid down thirty sous, and selected, according to the part which he wished to play on that especial day, the dress which suited him; and when he went down stairs again, the scamp was somebody else. Next day, the clothes were faithfully returned; and the Lightning Change Artist, who trusted everything to the thieves, was never robbed. These garments had one inconvenience,— they did not fit; not having been made for those who wore them, they were tight for one, loose for another, and suited nobody. Any swindler who exceeded or fell short of the average mean was uncomfortable in the Lightning Change Artist's costumes. A man must be neither too stout nor too thin. The Artist had only provided for ordinary

mortals. He had taken the measure of the species in the person of the first thief who turned up, who was neither stout nor thin, nor tall, nor short. Hence arose adaptations which were sometimes difficult, and which the Artist's customers got over as best they could. So much the worse for the exceptions! The statesman's garments, for instance, black from head to foot, and consequently becoming, would have been too loose for Pitt and too tight for Castelcicala.

The statesman's suit was thus described in the Artist's catalogue; we copy: "A black cloth coat, black moleskin trousers, a silk waistcoat, boots, and white shirt." On the margin was written, "*Ex-Ambassador,*" and a note which we will also transcribe: "In a separate box, a carefully dressed peruke, green spectacles, bunch of seals, and two little quills an inch in length, wrapped in cotton." All this belonged to the statesman, the ex-ambassador. The whole costume was, if we may so express it, exhausted; the seams were white; and a small button-hole gaped at one of the elbows; moreover, a button was missing off the front,— but this is a mere detail; as the hand of the statesman should always be thrust into his coat and laid upon his heart, it was its duty to hide the missing button.

Had Marius been familiar with the occult institutions of Paris, he would at once have recognized upon the back of the visitor whom Basque had just shown in the statesman's coat borrowed from the "hand-me-down" shop of the Lightning Change Artist.

Marius's disappointment on seeing a different man from the one whom he expected turned to the disadvantage of the new-comer.

He examined him from head to foot, while that personage made him an exaggerated bow, and asked curtly: "What do you want?"

The man replied with an amiable grin, of which the caressing smile of a crocodile might supply some idea:

"It seems to me impossible that I have not already had the honour of seeing you, Baron, in society. I have a pe-

culiar impression of having met you a few years back at the Princess Bagration's, and in the drawing-room of his Excellency Viscount Dambray, Peer of France."

It is always good tactics in swindling to pretend to recognize a person whom the swindler does not know.

Marius paid attention to the man's words. He studied his accent and gestures, but his disappointment increased; the pronunciation was nasal, and absolutely unlike the sharp, dry voice he expected.

He was utterly thrown off the track.

"I do not know," he said, "either Madame Bagration or Monsieur Dambray. I never in my life set foot in the house of either of them."

The answer was surly. The personage with undiminished affability continued: —

"Then it must have been at Châteaubriand's that I saw you! I know Châteaubriand intimately. He is a most affable man. He sometimes says to me: 'Thénard, my good friend, won't you drink a glass with me?'"

Marius's brow became sterner and sterner.

"I never had the honour of being introduced to M. de Châteaubriand. Come to the point. What do you want?"

The man bowed lower still before the harsh voice.

"Deign to listen to me, Baron. There is in America, in a region near Panama, a village called La Joya. This village is composed of a single house,— a large, square house, three stories high, built of bricks dried in the sun, each side of the square five hundred feet long, and each story retreating from the one below it for a distance of twelve feet, so as to leave a terrace in front which runs all round the house. In the centre is an inner court where provisions and ammunition are stored; there are no windows, only loop-holes; no doors, only ladders,— ladders to mount from the ground to the first terrace, and from the first to the second, and from the second to the third; ladders to descend into the inner court; no doors to the rooms, only traps; no staircases to the apartments, only ladders. At night the trap-doors are

closed, the ladders are drawn up, blunderbusses and carbines are placed in the loop-holes; there is no way of entering; it is a house by day, a citadel by night; eight hundred inhabitants,— such is that village. Why such precautions? Because the country is dangerous; it is full of cannibals. Then why do people go there? Because it is a marvellous country; gold is found there."

"What are you driving at?" interrupted Marius, who had passed from disappointment to impatience.

"To this, Baron. I am an old, worn-out diplomatist. I am sick of our old civilization. I want to try savages."

"What next?"

"Baron, egotism is the law of the world. The proletarian peasant wench who works by the day turns round when the diligence passes, but the peasant proprietress who is working on her own field does not turn. The poor man's dog barks at the rich; the rich man's dog barks at the poor. Every man for himself. Self-interest,— that is the object of mankind. Gold is the magnet."

"What next? Conclude."

"I should like to go and settle at La Joya. There are three of us. I have my wife and my daughter,— a very lovely girl. The voyage is long and expensive. I am short of funds."

"What is that to me?" asked Marius.

The stranger stretched his neck out of his cravat, a gesture characteristic of the vulture, and said, with a more affable smile than ever,—

"Have you read my letter, Baron?"

The fact is that the contents of the epistle had escaped Marius. He had seen the writing rather than read the letter. He scarcely remembered it. A fresh start had just been given him. He noticed that detail: "My wife and daughter."

He fixed a penetrating glance on the stranger. A magistrate could not have done it better. He confined himself to saying:—

" Come to the point."

He almost laid in wait for him.

The stranger thrust his hands into his waistcoat pockets, raised his head without straightening his backbone, but scrutinizing Marius in his turn with the green gaze of his spectacles.

" So be it, Baron. I will come to the point. I have a secret to sell you."

" A secret? "

" A secret."

" Which concerns me? "

" Slightly."

" What is this secret? "

Marius scanned the man more and more closely as he listened.

" I will begin gratis," said the stranger. " You will soon see that it is interesting."

" Speak."

" Baron, you have in your house a robber and an assassin."

Marius gave a start.

" In my house? No," said he.

The imperturbable stranger brushed his hat on his elbow, and went on: —

" An assassin and robber. Observe, Baron, that I am not speaking now of old, forgotten deeds,— deeds which might be outlawed by the lapse of time, and effaced by repentance before God. I speak of recent facts, actual facts, of facts still unknown to justice. I continue. This man has crept into your confidence, and almost into your family, under a false name. I will tell you his true name, and tell you for nothing."

" I am listening."

" His name is Jean Valjean."

" I know it."

" I will tell you, also for nothing, who he is."

" Speak."

" He is an ex-convict."

"I know it."

"You know it because I have had the honour to tell you."

"No, I knew it before."

Marius's cold tone, this double reply, "I know it," his laconic answers so inimical to dialogue, aroused some latent anger in the stranger. He shot a furious side-glance at Marius, which was immediately extinguished. Rapid though it was, the glance was one of those which are recognized if they have once been seen; it did not escape Marius. Certain flashes can only come from certain souls; the eye, that cellar-door of the soul, is lit up by them. Green spectacles conceal nothing; you might as well put a pane of glass over hell.

The stranger continued, smiling: —

"I will not venture to contradict you, Baron; but in any case you see that I am well informed. Now, what I have to tell you is known to myself alone. It affects the fortune of the Baroness. It is an extraordinary secret. It is for sale. I offer it you first. Cheap,— twenty thousand francs."

"I know that secret as I know the others," said Marius.

The personage felt the necessity of lowering his price a little.

"Come, Baron, say ten thousand francs, and I will speak."

"I repeat that you can tell me nothing. I know what you want to say to me."

There was a fresh flash in the man's eye. He exclaimed: —

"Still, I must dine to-day. It is an extraordinary secret, I tell you. Sir, I must speak. I will speak. Give me twenty francs."

Marius looked steadily at him.

"I know your extraordinary secret, just as I knew Jean Valjean's name, just as I know your name."

"My name?"

"Yes."

"That is not difficult, Baron. I had the honour of writing it to you and of mentioning it to you. Thénard."

"——dier."

"Eh?"

"Thénardier."

"Who's that?"

In danger the porcupine bristles, the beetle feigns death, the old guard form a square. This man began to laugh.

Then he flipped a grain of dust off his coat-sleeve.

Marius continued: —

"You are also Jondrette the workman, Fabantou the actor, Genflot the poet, Alvares the Spanish Don, and Madame Balizard —"

"Madame who?"

"— and you once kept a pot-house at Montfermeil."

"A pot-house! Never!"

"And I tell you that you are Thénardier."

"I deny it."

"And that you are a scoundrel. Take that!"

And Marius, drawing a bank-note from his pocket, threw it in his face.

"Thank you! Pardon me! Five hundred francs! Baron!"

And the man, overwhelmed, bowing, clutching the note, examined it.

"Five hundred francs," he continued, quite stunned. And he stammered half aloud: "A genuine rustler!" [1]

Then suddenly: —

"Well, be it so. Let us be at our ease."

And with monkey-like dexterity, throwing back his hair, tearing off his spectacles, and snatching the two quills to which we just now alluded, and which we have seen before in another part of this book, he took off his face as you or I take off our hat.

His eye grew bright; his forehead, uneven, scarred, lumpy, hideously wrinkled at top, was revealed, his nose became as sharp as a beak; the ferocious, cunning profile of the man of prey re-appeared.

"You are infallible, Baron," he said in a clear voice, from

[1] Slang term for a bank-bill, derived from its rustling noise.

which all nasal twang had disappeared; "I am Thénardier."

And he drew up his crooked back.

Thénardier, for it was really he, was strangely surprised; he would have been troubled, had he been capable of such a thing. He had come to bring astonishment, and it was he who experienced it. He had been paid five hundred francs for his humiliation, and, taking it all in all, he was satisfied; but he was none the less bewildered.

He saw this Baron Pontmercy for the first time, and in spite of his disguise, this Baron Pontmercy recognized him, and recognized him thoroughly. And not only did this Baron know all about Thénardier, but he also seemed familiar with Jean Valjean.

Who was this almost beardless young man, so cold and so generous; who knew people's names, knew all their names, and opened his purse to them; who bullied rogues like a judge, and paid them like a dupe?

Thénardier, it will be remembered, though he had been Marius's neighbour, had never seen him, which is frequently the case in Paris; he had formerly vaguely heard his daughters speak of a very poor young man named Marius, who lived in the house. He had written him, without knowing him, the letter of which we know.

No connection between that Marius and Baron Pontmercy was possible in his mind.

As to the name Pontmercy, it must be remembered that on the field of Waterloo he had heard only the last two syllables, and for these he had always felt the legitimate scorn due to a mere expression of thanks.

However, he had managed, through his daughter Azelma, whom he had put on the track of the married couple on February 16, and by his own researches, to learn a good many things; and from the depths of his under-world, he had succeeded in seizing more than one mysterious clew. He had, by sheer industry, discovered, or at least, by dint of induction he had divined, who the man was whom he had met on a certain day in the Great Sewer. From the man he had easily

arrived at the name. He knew that the Baroness Pontmercy was Cosette. But on that point he intended to be discreet.

Who was Cosette? He did not exactly know himself. He certainly got a glimpse of some illegitimacy. Fantine's story had always seemed to him suspicious. But what was the use of talking about it? To get paid for his silence? He had, or fancied he had, something better to sell than that; and, in all probability, to go and make Baron Pontmercy, without further proof, this revelation: "Your wife is only a bastard," would simply result in attracting the husband's boot to the broadest part of his person.

To Thénardier's thinking, the conversation with Marius had not yet begun. He had been obliged to fall back, modify his strategy, quit his position and make a change of front; but nothing essential was as yet compromised, and he had five hundred francs in his pocket. Moreover, he had something decisive to say, and he felt himself strong even against this Baron Pontmercy, who was so well informed and so well armed. For men of Thénardier's nature, every dialogue is a combat. What was his situation in the one which was about to begin? He did not know to whom he was speaking, but he knew of what he was speaking; he rapidly reviewed his forces, and after saying: "I am Thénardier," he waited.

Marius was in deep thought. He had at last found Thénardier. The man whom he had so eagerly desired to find stood before him. He could at last honour Colonel Pontmercy's recommendation.

It humiliated him that that hero should owe anything to this ruffian, and that the bill of exchange drawn by his father from the depths of the tomb, upon him, Marius, had remained up to this day protested. It seemed to him, too, in the complex state of his mind toward Thénardier, that he was bound to avenge the colonel for the misfortune of having been saved by such a villain. But, however this might be, he was satisfied. He was at length about to free the colonel's shade from this unworthy creditor, and he felt as if he were rescuing his father's memory from a debtor's prison.

Side by side with this duty there was another,— to clear up, if possible, the source of Cosette's fortune. The opportunity appeared to present itself. Thénardier probably knew something. It might be well to search this man to the core.

He began with that.

Thénardier caused the " genuine rustler " to disappear in his waistcoat pocket, and looked at Marius with gentleness that was almost tender.

Marius was the first to break the silence.

" Thénardier, I have told you your name. Now shall I tell you your secret,— the one which you came here to impart to me? I have means of information of my own. You shall see that I know more than you do. Jean Valjean, as you said, is an assassin and a robber,— a robber, because he plundered a rich manufacturer, M. Madeleine, whose ruin he caused; an assassin, because he murdered Inspector Javert."

" I do not understand you, Baron," said Thénardier.

" I will make you understand. Listen. In a certain district of the Pas de Calais, about the year 1822, there was a man who had once fallen out with the authorities, and who had rehabilitated and raised himself, under the name of Monsieur Madeleine. This man had become, in the fullest sense of the word, an honest man. He made the fortune of an entire town by a new industry,— the manufacture of black glass goods. As for his private fortune, he made that too, but as a second thought, and, in some sort, by accident. He was the foster-father of the poor. He founded hospitals, opened schools, visited the sick, dowered girls, supported widows, adopted orphans; he was, as it were, the guardian of the whole country. He refused the cross of the Legion of Honour, he was made mayor. A released convict knew the secret of a penalty formerly incurred by this man; he denounced him, and had him arrested, and took advantage of the arrest to come to Paris and draw out of Lafitte's bank, — I have the facts from the cashier himself,— by means of a false signature, the sum of half a million and more, which

belonged to M. Madeleine. The convict who robbed M. Madeleine, was Jean Valjean. As for the other fact, you can tell me no more than I know. Jean Valjean killed Inspector Javert; he shot him with a pistol. I, who speak to you, was present."

Thénardier gave Marius the sovereign glance of a conquered man who regains his hold on victory, and recovered in a single minute all the ground he had lost. But his smile at once returned. The inferior, when in presence of his superior, must keep his triumph to himself.

Thénardier contented himself with saying to Marius:

"Baron, we are on the wrong track."

And he emphasized his words by giving his bunch of seals an expressive twirl.

"What!" replied Marius, "do you dispute that? These are facts."

"They are chimeras. The confidence with which you honour me makes it my duty to tell you so. Truth and justice before all things. I do not like to see people accused wrongfully. Sir, Jean Valjean did not rob M. Madeleine, and Jean Valjean did not kill Javert."

"This is too much! How so?"

"For two reasons."

"What are they? Speak."

"The first is this: he did not rob M. Madeleine, because Jean Valjean himself is M. Madeleine."

"What nonsense are you talking?"

"And this is the second: he did not assassinate Javert, because the man who killed Javert was Javert."

"What do you mean?"

"That Javert committed suicide."

"Prove it! prove it!" cried Marius, beside himself.

Thénardier resumed, scanning his sentence after the fashion of an ancient Alexandrine verse: —

"Police - Agent - Javert-was-found-drowned-un-der-a-boat-near-the-Pont-au-Change."

"But prove it, then."

Thénardier drew from his side-pocket a large gray-paper envelope, which seemed to contain folded papers of various sizes.

"I have my proofs," he said calmly.

And he added: —

"Sir, in your interests I desired to know Jean Valjean thoroughly. I say that Jean Valjean and Madeleine are one and the same man, and I say that Javert had no other assassin but Javert; and when I say this, it is because I have proofs,— not manuscript proofs, for writing is suspicious, writing is complaisant, but printed proofs."

As he spoke, Thénardier extracted from the envelope two newspapers, yellow, faded, and strongly saturated with tobacco. One of these papers, broken at every fold, and falling into rags, seemed much older than the other.

"Two facts, two proofs," said Thénardier, as he handed Marius the two open newspapers.

These two papers the reader knows. One, the older, a number of the "Drapeau Blanc" for July 25, 1823, of which the exact text was given in the second volume of this story, established the identity of M. Madeleine and Jean Valjean.

The other, a "Moniteur," of June 15, 1832, announced the suicide of Javert, adding that it appeared from a verbal report made by Javert to the prefect, that he had been made prisoner at the barricade of the Rue de la Chanvrerie, and owed his life to the magnanimity of an insurgent, who, holding him under his pistol, instead of blowing out his brains, fired in the air.

Marius read. Here was evidence, a certain date, irrefragable proof.

These two papers were not printed expressly to support Thénardier's statement; the note published in the "Moniteur" was an official communication from the prefecture of police. Marius could no longer doubt.

The cashier's information was false, and he was himself mistaken.

Jean Valjean, suddenly growing grand, emerged from the cloud. Marius could not repress a cry of joy.

"Well, then, that poor fellow is a wonderful man! The whole of that fortune was really his! He is Madeleine, the providence of an entire town! he is Jean Valjean, the saviour of Javert! he is a hero! he is a saint!"

"He is not a saint, and he is not a hero," said Thénardier. "He is an assassin and a robber."

And he added, in the tone of a man who begins to feel himself possessed of some authority: "Let us be calm."

Robber, assassin; those words, which Marius thought had disappeared, and which returned, fell upon him like an icy shower-bath.

"Again —" said he.

"Again and yet again," said Thénardier. "Jean Valjean did not rob M. Madeleine, but he is a robber. He did not murder Javert, but he is a murderer."

"Do you allude," continued Marius, "to that paltry theft committed forty years back, and expiated, as is proved from those very papers of yours, by a whole life of repentance, self-denial, and virtue."

"I say assassination and robbery, Baron; and I repeat that I allude to recent facts. What I have to reveal to you is absolutely unknown. It is unpublished matter, and you may perhaps find in it the source of the fortune so cleverly offered by Jean Valjean to the Baroness. I say cleverly, for it would be far from stupid, by a donation of that nature, to step into an honourable house, whose comforts he would share, and at the same time to hide his crime, enjoy his robbery, bury his name, and create a family."

"I might interrupt you here," observed Marius, "but go on."

"I will tell you all, Baron, leaving the reward to your generosity. This secret is worth its weight in gold. You will say to me: 'Why not apply to Jean Valjean?' For a very simple reason. I know that he has stripped himself, and stripped himself in your favour, and I consider the com-

bination ingenious; but he has not a sou left. He would show me his empty hands; and as I want money for my journey to La Joya, I prefer you,— you who have everything, to him who has nothing. I am rather tired; permit me to take a chair."

Marius sat down, and signed to him to do the same.

Thénardier installed himself in an easy-chair, picked up his two newspapers, put them back in their envelope, and muttered, as he pecked at the "Drapeau Blanc" with his nail: "It cost me a deal of trouble to get this one."

This done, he crossed his legs, threw himself back in the chair,— an attitude characteristic of those who are sure of what they are saying; then he began his narrative gravely, emphasizing his words: —

"Baron, on June 6, 1832, about a year ago, on the day of the riots, a man was in the Great Sewer of Paris, at the point where the sewer enters the Seine, between the Pont des Invalides and the Pont de Jena."

Marius hurriedly drew his chair closer to Thénardier's chair. Thénardier noticed this movement, and continued with the deliberation of an orator who holds his hearer and feels his adversary quivering under his words: —

"This man, forced to hide himself (for reasons, however, unconnected with politics), had selected the sewer as his abode, and had a key to it. It was, I repeat, June 6; it might have been about eight in the evening. The man heard a noise in the sewer. Greatly surprised, he concealed himself, and watched. It was the sound of footsteps; some one was walking in the darkness and coming in his direction. Strange to say, there was another man in the sewer besides himself. The mouth of the sewer was no great distance off. A faint light which fell through it, enabled him to recognize the new-comer, and to see that he was carrying something on his back. He walked in a stooping posture. He was an ex-convict, and what he had on his shoulders was a corpse. A flagrant case of assassination, if ever there was one. As for the robbery, that is a matter of course; no one kills a man for

nothing. This convict was on his way to throw the body into the river. A fact worth noticing is, that before reaching the outlet the convict, who had come a long way through the sewer, must necessarily have encountered a frightful bog, where it seems as if he might have left the corpse; but the sewer-men, who came to make repairs next day, would have found the murdered man, and that did not suit the assassin. He preferred to carry his burden across the slough, and his exertions must have been frightful. It is impossible to risk one's life more completely; I do not understand how he got out of it alive."

Marius's chair came nearer still. Thénardier took advantage of this to draw a long breath. He continued:

"Baron, a sewer is not the Champ de Mars. Everything is wanting there, even space. When two men are there, they must meet. This is what happened. The man who was domiciled there and the passer-by were compelled to bid each other good-evening, to their mutual regret. The passer-by said to the inhabitant: 'You see what I have on my back. I must get out. You have the key; give it to me.' This convict was a man of terrible strength. There was no chance of refusing him. Still, the man who held the key parleyed, solely to gain time. He examined the dead man, but he could see nothing, except that he was young, well dressed, looked like a rich man, and was quite disfigured with blood. While talking, he managed to tear off from behind, without the murderer perceiving it, a piece of the skirt of the victim's coat,— a convincing proof, you understand; a means of getting on the track of the affair, and bringing the crime home to the criminal.

"He puts this bit of evidence in his pocket; after which he opened the grating, allowed the man to go out with his burden on his back, locked the grating again, and himself fled, unwilling to be mixed up any further in the adventure, or above all, to be present when the assassin threw the corpse into the river. You now understand. The man who carried the corpse was Jean Valjean; the one who

had the key is speaking to you at this moment; and the piece of the coat-skirt —"

Thénardier completed his sentence by drawing from his pocket and holding on a level with his eyes, nipped between his two thumbs and forefingers, a ragged strip of black cloth all covered with dark spots.

Marius had risen, pale, scarcely able to breathe, his eyes fixed on the bit of black cloth, and without uttering a syllable, without taking his eyes from the fragment, he retreated toward the wall, and, with his right hand extended behind him, felt along the wall for a key which was in the lock of a cupboard near the mantelpiece.

He found this key, opened the cupboard, and thrust in his arm without looking, and without taking his startled gaze from the rag which Thénardier displayed.

Meantime Thénardier continued: —

"Baron, I have the strongest grounds for believing that the murdered young man was a wealthy foreigner, lured by Jean Valjean into a trap, and the bearer of an enormous sum of money."

"I was the young man, and here is the coat!" cried Marius; and he flung on the floor an old black, blood-stained coat.

Then snatching the strip from Thénardier's hands, he crouched over the coat and compared it with the skirt. The rent fitted exactly, and the fragment completed the coat.

Thénardier was petrified. He thought: "Well, I am flabbergasted!"

Marius drew himself up, shuddering, desperate, radiant. He fumbled in his pocket, and strode furiously toward Thénardier, offering him, and almost thrusting into his face, his fist filled with bank-notes for five hundred and thousand francs.

"You are an infamous wretch! You are a liar, a slanderer, a villain! You came to accuse that man, you have justified him; you meant to ruin him, you have only succeeded in glorifying him. And it is you who are the robber! It is you who are the assassin! I saw you, Thénardier —

Jondrette, in that den on the Boulevard de l'Hôpital. I know enough about you to send you to the galleys, and even farther if I choose. There are a thousand francs, bully that you are!"

And he threw a thousand-franc note at Thénardier.

"Ah, Jondrette — Thénardier, vile scoundrel! Let this serve you as a lesson, you hawker of second-hand secrets, you merchant of mysteries, you searcher of shadows, you wretch! Take these five hundred francs, and be gone from here! Waterloo protects you."

"Waterloo!" growled Thénardier, as he pocketed the five hundred francs along with the thousand.

"Yes, assassin! You saved the life of a colonel there."

"A general!" said Thénardier, raising his head.

"A colonel," repeated Marius in a fury. "I would not give a farthing for a general. And you come here to commit infamies! I tell you that you have committed every crime! Begone! Be off! Be happy, that is all I desire! Ah, monster! here are three thousand francs more. Take them. You will depart to-morrow for America with your daughter; for your wife is dead, you abominable liar! I will watch over your departure, scoundrel, and at the moment when you set sail, I will pay you twenty thousand francs. Go and get hanged elsewhere."

"Baron," answered Thénardier, bowing to the ground, "accept my eternal gratitude."

And Thénardier left the room, understanding nothing, but stunned and enchanted by this sweet crushing under bags of gold, and with this lightning flashing over his head in the shape of bank-notes. Struck by lightning he certainly was, but he was also content; and he would have been very sorry to have a lightning-rod to ward off such righting as that.

Let us finish with this man at once.

Two days after the events we have just recorded he started for America, thanks to Marius's care, under a false name, with his daughter Azelma, provided with an order on a New York banker for twenty-thousand francs. The moral poverty

of Thénardier, the tradesman who had missed his vocation, was irremediable; he was in America what he had been in Europe. Contact with a bad man is sometimes enough to corrupt a good deed, and to make something evil spring from it. With this money of Marius, Thénardier turned slave-dealer.

As soon as Thénardier had left the house, Marius ran into the garden, where Cosette was still walking.

"Cosette! Cosette!" he cried. "Come! come quickly! Let us be off. Basque, a cab! Cosette, come! Oh, heavens! it was he who saved my life. Let us not lose a minute! Put on your shawl."

Cosette thought him mad, and obeyed.

He could not breathe; he laid his hand on his heart to check its beating. He walked up and down with long strides; he embraced Cosette.

"Oh, Cosette," said he, "I am a wretch!"

Marius was bewildered. He began to catch a glimpse of some strangely lofty and sombre figure in this Jean Valjean. A rare virtue, supreme and sweet, humble in its immensity, appeared to him. The convict was transfigured into Christ.

Marius was dazzled by this miracle. He knew not exactly what he saw, but it was grand.

In an instant the cab was at the door.

Marius helped Cosette in and sprang after her.

"Driver," he cried, "No. 7, Rue de l'Homme Armé."

The carriage drove off.

"Oh, how glad I am!" said Cosette. "Rue de l'Homme Armé. I no longer dared to mention it to you. We are going to see Monsieur Jean."

"Your father, Cosette! Your father more than ever. Cosette, I see it all. You told me that you never received the letter I sent you by Gavroche. It must have fallen into his hands. Cosette, he went to the barricade to save me. As it is his greatest desire to be an angel, he saved others by the way; he saved Javert. He drew me out of that gulf to give me to you. He carried me on his back through that fright-

ful sewer. Ah! I am a monster of ingratitude. Cosette, after being your providence, he became mine. Just imagine, there was a horrible quagmire where a man might be drowned a hundred times over, drowned in mud, Cosette! He carried me through it. I had fainted; I saw nothing, I heard nothing, I could not know anything about my own adventures. We will bring him back, we will take him with us, whether he is willing or not; he shall never leave us again. I only hope he is at home! I only hope we shall find him! I will spend the rest of my life in revering him. Yes, that must be it, do you see, Cosette? Gavroche must have given my letter to him. That explains everything. You understand?"

Cosette did not understand a word.

"You are right," she said.

Meantime the carriage rolled on.

CHAPTER V

A NIGHT BEHIND WHICH IS DAY

JEAN VALJEAN turned at the knock which he heard at his door.

"Come in," he said feebly.

The door opened.

Cosette and Marius appeared.

Cosette rushed into the room.

Marius remained on the threshold, leaning against the door-post.

"Cosette!" said Jean Valjean.

And he sat up in his chair, his arms outstretched and trembling, haggard, livid, and ominous, an immense joy in his eyes.

Cosette, suffocated with emotion, fell on Jean Valjean's breast.

"Father!" said she.

Jean Valjean, utterly overcome, stammered: "Cosette! she! — you — madame! it is you! Oh, my God!"

And clasped in Cosette's arms, he exclaimed: —

"It is you! You are here! You forgive me, then!"

Marius, drooping his eyelids to keep his tears from flowing, advanced a step, and murmured between his lips, which were convulsively clenched to repress his sobs:

"Father!"

"And you, too,— you forgive me?" said Jean Valjean.

Marius could not find a word to say, and Jean Valjean added: "Thank you."

Cosette tore off her shawl and threw her bonnet on the bed.

"It is in my way," said she.

And seating herself on the old man's knees, she brushed back his white hair with an adorable movement, and kissed his forehead.

Jean Valjean, bewildered, let her have her way.

Cosette, who understood but vaguely, redoubled her caresses, as if she wished to pay the debt of Marius.

Jean Valjean stammered: —

"How foolish a man can be! I thought that I should never see her again. Just imagine, Monsieur Pontmercy, at the very moment when you came in, I was saying: 'All is over. Here is her little gown, I am a miserable man, I shall never see Cosette again;' I was saying this at the very moment when you were coming up the stairs. What an idiot I was! How idiotic we can be! But we reckon without God. The good God says: 'You imagine that you are going to be abandoned sure! No, no, things will not happen like that. Look here, there is a poor old fellow who wants an angel.' And the angel comes; and he sees his Cosette once more, and he sees his little Cosette once more! Oh, I was very unhappy."

For a moment he could not speak, then he went on:—

"I really needed to see Cosette for a little every now and

then. A heart requires a bone to gnaw. Still, I knew very well that I was in the way. I reasoned with myself: 'They do not want you, so stop in your corner; a man has no right to hang on forever.' Ah, God be praised; I see her again! Do you know, Cosette, that your husband is very handsome? What a pretty embroidered collar you are wearing; I am very glad, I like that pattern. Your husband chose it, did he not? And then, you must have some cashmere shawls. Monsieur Pontmercy, let me call her Cosette. It will not be for long."

And Cosette replied: —

"How unkind of you to leave us like that! Where have you been? Why did you stay away so long? Your journeys never used to last over three or four days. I sent Nicolette, and the answer always was: 'He is away.' When did you get back? Why did you not let us know? Do you know that you are greatly changed? Oh, naughty papa! He has been ill, and we did not know it. Here, Marius, feel how cold his hand is!"

"So you are here! So you forgive me, Monsieur Pontmercy!" repeated Jean Valjean.

At this remark, again repeated by Valjean, all that was swelling Marius's heart found vent.

He burst forth: —

"Cosette, do you hear? It has come to that! he asks my pardon. And do you know what he did for me, Cosette! He saved my life. He did more. He gave you to me. And after saving me and giving you to me, Cosette, what did he do for himself? He sacrificed himself. That is the man he is!

"And he says to me, the ingrate, the pitiless, the forgetful, the guilty one: 'Thank you!' Cosette, my whole life spent at this man's feet would be too little. That barricade, that sewer, that fiery furnace, that cesspool, he went through them all for me, for you, Cosette! He carried me through every form of death, which he held at bay from me and accepted for himself. He possesses every courage, every

virtue, every heroism, and every holiness. Cosette, that man is an angel!"

"Hush! hush!" said Jean Valjean, in a low voice. "Why tell all that?"

"But you!" cried Marius, with a passion in which was veneration, "why did you not tell me? It is your fault. You save people's lives, and you conceal it from them! You do more: under the pretext of unmasking yourself, you calumniate yourself. It is frightful!"

"I told the truth," replied Jean Valjean.

"No," retorted Marius, "the truth is the whole truth; and you did not tell that. You were Monsieur Madeleine, why not tell me so? You saved Javert, why not tell me so? I owed my life to you, why not tell me so?"

"Because I thought as you do. I thought that you were right. It was best that I should leave you. Had you known about that affair of the sewer, you would have compelled me to remain with you. I was therefore forced to hold my tongue. Had I spoken, it would have been embarrassing in every way."

"Embarrassing to whom, to what?" Marius broke out. "Do you suppose that you are going to stay here? We shall carry you off with us. Oh, good heavens! when I think that I only learned all this by a mere accident! We shall carry you off with us. You are a part of ourselves. You are her father and mine. You shall not spend another day in this frightful house. Do not fancy that you will be here to-morrow."

"To-morrow," said Jean Valjean, "I shall not be here, but I shall not be at your house."

"What do you mean?" answered Marius. "Oh! no, we shall not permit any more journeys. You shall not leave us again. You belong to us. We will not let you go."

"This time it is for good," added Cosette. "We have a carriage below. I mean to elope with you. If necessary, I shall use force."

And, laughing, she pretended to lift the old man in her arms.

"Your room still stands ready in our house," she went on. "If you only knew how pretty the garden is just now! The azaleas are coming on splendidly. The walks are strewn with river sand; there are little violet shells. You shall eat my strawberries. I water them myself. And no more 'madame' and no more 'Monsieur Jean,' for we are living under a republic; we are all on friendly terms, are we not, Marius? The programme is changed. If you only knew, father, what a grief I have had; a redbreast had made its nest in a hole in the wall, and a horrible cat ate it. My poor, pretty little robin redbreast, that used to put its head out of its window and look at me! I cried about it. I could have killed the cat! But now, nobody weeps. Everybody laughs, everybody is happy. You will come with us. How pleased grandfather will be! You shall have your bed in the garden, you shall cultivate it, and we shall see whether your strawberries are as fine as mine. And then, I will do everything you wish, and then you will obey me nicely."

Jean Valjean listened without hearing. He heard the music of her voice rather than the meaning of her words; one of those heavy tears, which are the black pearls of the soul, slowly gathered in his eye.

He murmured:—

"The proof that God is good is that she is here."

"Father!" said Cosette.

Jean Valjean continued:—

"It is true it would be charming to live together. Their trees are full of birds. I should walk about with Cosette. It is sweet to be with living people, who bid each other good-morning, who call to each other in the garden. I should see her the first thing in the morning. We would each cultivate a little bed. She would give me her strawberries to eat, I would let her pick my roses. It would be delicious. But—"

He broke off, and said gently: "It is a pity."

The tear did not fall; it was recalled, and Jean Valjean substituted a smile for it.

Cosette took both the old man's hands in hers.

"Good heavens!" said she, "your hands are colder than ever. Are you ill? Are you in pain?"

"I? No," replied Jean Valjean; "I am quite well. Only —" He paused.

"Only what?"

"I am going to die directly."

Marius and Cosette shuddered.

"To die!" exclaimed Marius.

"Yes; but that is nothing," said Jean Valjean.

He breathed, smiled, and added:—

"Cosette, you were talking to me; go on, speak again. So your little redbreast died? Speak; let me hear your voice."

Marius, who was petrified, gazed at the old man.

Cosette uttered a piercing shriek:—

"Father? father! You will live! you must live! I insist upon your living; do you hear?"

Jean Valjean looked up at her in adoration.

"Oh, yes, forbid me to die. Who knows? Perhaps I shall obey. I was on the verge of dying when you came. That stopped me, it seemed to me that I was born again."

"You are full of strength and life," exclaimed Marius. "How can you suppose that a man dies like that? You have known grief; you shall know no more. It is I who ask your pardon, and on my knees! You will live, and live with us, and live a long time. We take possession of you once more. Here are two of us who will henceforth have but one thought,— your happiness!"

"There, you see," said Cosette, bathed in tears, "Marius says that you will not die."

Jean Valjean continued to smile.

"Even if you were to take me home with you, Monsieur Pontmercy, would that make me other than I am? No. God thought as you and I did, and he does not change his

mind. It is better for me to go. Death is an excellent arrangement. God knows better than we do what we need. That you should be happy, that Monsieur Pontmercy should have Cosette, that youth should espouse the dawn, that there should be around you, my children, lilacs and nightingales, that your life should be a smooth lawn bathed in sunlight, that all the enchantments of heaven should fill your souls, and that I who am good for nothing should die,— all this is surely right.

"Come, be reasonable. Nothing is possible now; I am fully conscious that all is over. An hour ago I had a fainting-fit. And, then, last night, I drank the whole of that jug of water. How good your husband is, Cosette! You are much better off with him than with me!"

A noise was heard at the door.

It was the doctor.

"Good-day, and good-by, doctor," said Jean Valjean. "Here are my poor children."

Marius went up to the doctor. He said but one word to him: "Sir?"— but his manner of pronouncing it contained a complete question. The doctor answered the question by an expressive glance.

"Because things are unpleasant," said Jean Valjean, "is no reason for being unjust to God."

There was a pause.

All breasts were oppressed.

Jean Valjean turned to Cosette. He gazed at her as if he wished to take that last look with him into eternity.

In the deep shadow into which he had already sunk, ecstasy was still possible for him in gazing on Cosette. The reflection of her sweet countenance illumined his pale face. The sepulchre may have its radiance.

The doctor felt his pulse.

"Ah, it was you that he wanted," he murmured, looking at Marius and Cosette.

And bending to Marius's ear, he whispered:—

"Too late."

Jean Valjean, almost without ceasing to gaze at Cosette, looked at Marius and the doctor with serenity.

These scarcely articulate words came from his lips:

"It is nothing to die; it is terrible not to live."

All at once he rose. Such returns of strength are sometimes a sign of the death-agony itself. He walked with a firm step to the wall, thrust aside Marius and the doctor, who tried to help him, took from the wall the small copper crucifix which hung on it, returned to his seat with all the vigour of perfect health, and said in a loud voice, as he laid the crucifix on the table:—

"There is the great martyr."

Then his chest sank in, his head trembled as if the intoxication of the tomb were seizing hold of him.

His hands, resting on his knees, began to pluck at the cloth of his trousers.

Cosette supported his shoulders and sobbed, and tried to speak to him, but could not. Amid words mingled with that mournful saliva which accompanies tears, could be distinguished these broken sentences: "Father, do not leave us. Is it possible that we have found you again only to lose you?"

It may be said that the death-agony moves like a serpent. It comes, goes, advances toward the grave, and then turns back toward life. There is a sort of groping in the act of dying.

Jean Valjean, after this partial swoon, rallied, shook his head as if to throw off the shadows, and again became almost lucid.

He caught hold of Cosette's sleeve and kissed it.

"He is recovering, doctor, he is recovering!" cried Marius.

"You are both good," said Jean Valjean. "I will tell you what has grieved me. It grieves me, Monsieur Pontmercy, that you should refuse to touch that money. That money really belongs to your wife. I will explain it to you, my children, and that is one reason why I am so glad to see you. Black jet comes from England; white jet comes from

Norway. It is all set down in that paper there, which you will read. I invented a way of substituting soldered snaps for welded snaps in bracelets. They are prettier, better, and not so dear. You will understand how much money may be made in that way. So Cosette's fortune is really hers. I give you these details that your mind may be at rest."

The porter's wife had come up, and was peeping through the open door. The doctor sent her off, but he could not prevent the zealous old woman from crying to the dying man before she went:—

"Will you have a priest?"

"I have one," answered Jean Valjean.

And he seemed to point with his finger to a spot over his head, where one would have said that he saw some one. It is probable, in truth, that the bishop was present at this death scene.

Cosette gently slipped a pillow behind Jean Valjean's back.

He resumed:—

"Monsieur Pontmercy, have no fears, I conjure you. The six hundred thousand francs really belong to Cosette! My whole life will have been wasted if you will not enjoy them! We succeeded in making those glass goods famously. We rivalled what is called Berlin jewelry. To be sure, the black beads of Germany cannot be equalled. A gross, which contains twelve hundred well-cut beads, only costs three francs."

When a being who is dear to us is about to die, we gaze on him with a look which clings to him, and would fain hold him back.

Cosette and Marius stood before him, hand in hand, in mute anguish, not knowing how to face death, trembling and despairing.

Jean Valjean failed from moment to moment. He sank; he drew nearer to the dark horizon.

His breathing had become intermittent; a slight rattle impeded it. He had some difficulty in moving his forearm, his feet had lost all power of motion; and as the helplessness

of his limbs and the exhaustion of his body increased, all the majesty of his soul ascended and was revealed upon his brow. The light of the unknown world was already visible in his eyes.

His face grew pale and smiled. Life was no longer there; there was something else.

His breath grew short, his glance grew grander. He was a corpse whose wings could be seen.

He signed to Cosette to approach, and then to Marius; the last minute of the last hour had evidently come.

He began to speak to them in so faint a voice that it seemed to come from a distance, and it was as if there were henceforth a wall between them and him.

"Come nearer, come nearer, both of you. I love you dearly. Oh, how pleasant it is to die like this! You, too, love me, my Cosette. I knew that you were fond of your poor old man. How kind it was of you to place that pillow at my back! You will weep for me a little, will you not? Not too much. I do not want you to feel a real sorrow. You must amuse yourselves as much as you can, my children. I forgot to tell you that there was more profit on the buckles without tongues than on all the rest. A gross of twelve dozen cost ten francs to produce, and sold for sixty. It was really a good trade. You need not be surprised at the six hundred thousand francs, Monsieur Pontmercy. It is honest money. You may be rich without any fear. You must have a carriage, a box at the opera now and then, handsome ball-dresses, my Cosette, and give good dinners to your friends, and be very happy. I was writing to Cosette just now. She will find my letter. To her, I leave the two candlesticks on the mantelpiece. They are silver; but to me they are made of gold, of diamonds; they change the candles placed in them into consecrated tapers. I know not whether the man who gave them to me is satisfied with me above. I have done what I could. My children, you will not forget that I am a poor man; you will have me buried in any odd corner, with a stone to mark the spot. That is my wish.

No name on the stone. If Cosette likes to visit it now and then, it will give me pleasure. And you, too, Monsieur Pontmercy. I must confess that I did not always like you. I ask your forgiveness. Now she and you are all one to me. I am very grateful to you. I feel that you make Cosette happy. If you only knew, Monsieur Pontmercy, her pretty red cheeks were my joy; when I saw her a little pale, I was miserable. There is a five-hundred-franc note in the chest of drawers; I have not touched it. It is for the poor. Cosette, do you see your little dress there on the bed? Do you recognize it? And yet it was only ten years ago! How time flies! We have been very happy. It is all over now. Do not weep, my children. I am not going very far, and I shall see you from there; you will only have to look up at night, and you will see me smile. Cosette, do you remember Montfermeil? You were in the wood; you were very much frightened. Do you remember when I took the bucket-handle? That was the first time I ever touched your poor little hand. It was so cold! Oh, you had red hands in those days, miss; but now they are very white. And the big doll! Do you remember? You called her Catherine. You were sorry that you did not take her with you to the convent! How you did make me laugh sometimes, my sweet angel! When it had rained, you used to set straws floating in the gutter, and you watched them sail away. One day I gave you a wicker battledore, and a shuttlecock with yellow, blue, and green feathers. You have forgotten it. You were such a rogue when you were little! You used to play. You would hang cherries in your ears. Those are things of the past. The forests through which I went with my child, the trees under which we walked, the convent where we hid, the sports, the hearty laughter of childhood, are all shadows now. I imagined that all this belonged to me. That was where my stupidity lay. Those Thénardiers were very wicked. You must forgive them. Cosette, the time has come to tell you your mother's name. Her name was Fantine. Remember that name,— Fantine. Fall on your knees every time that

you utter it. She suffered. She loved you dearly. She knew as much misery as you have known happiness. Thus God apportions things. He lives above; he sees us all, and he knows what he does amid his great stars. I am going away, my children. Love each other well and always. There is no other thing in the world but that: love one another. You will think sometimes of the poor old man who died here. Oh, my Cosette! it is not my fault, indeed it is not, that I have not seen you all this time; it broke my heart. I went as far as the corner of the street. I must have produced a strange effect on the people who saw me pass. I was like a madman; once I even went out without my hat. My children, I can no longer see very clearly. I had other things to say to you, but no matter. Think of me sometimes. You are blessed beings. I don't know what ails me. I see light. Come nearer yet. I die happy. Let me lay my hands on your beloved heads."

Cosette and Marius fell on their knees, heart-broken, choked with tears, each under one of Jean Valjean's hands. Those august hands did not move again.

He had fallen back, the light from the two candles fell full upon him.

His white face looked up to heaven; he let Cosette and Marius cover his hands with kisses.

He was dead.

The night was starless and intensely dark. No doubt, some immense angel stood in the shadow, with outstretched wings, waiting for his soul.

CHAPTER VI

THE GRASS HIDES, AND THE RAIN EFFACES

NEAR the Potters' Field in the cemetery of Père-Lachaise, far removed from the elegant quarter of that city of sepulchres, far from those fantastic tombs which display all the hideous fashions of death in the presence of eternity, in a deserted corner, under an old wall, beneath a yew over which bind-weed climbs, and amid dandelions and moss, there is a tombstone. That stone is no more exempt than others from the gnawing tooth of Time, from mildew, lichen, and the deposits of birds. Water turns it green, the air blackens it. It is not near any path, and people do not care to go in that direction, because the grass is tall and they get their feet wet directly. When there is a little sunshine, the lizards gather there; there is a rustling of wild oats all about it. In springtime, linnets sing on the tree.

That stone is quite bare. In cutting it, only the necessities of the tomb were taken into consideration; no further care was taken than to make the stone long enough and narrow enough to cover a man.

No name is to be read on it.

Many, many years ago, however, a hand wrote on it in pencil these four lines, which have become gradually illegible from rain and dust, and which are now probably effaced:—

"He sleeps. Though cruel was his fate and drear,
He lived. He died when angels ceased to hover near;
From life to death he passed without a sigh,
As darkness falls, when tired day doth die."

THE END.

HANS OF ICELAND

INTRODUCTION

"HANS of Iceland" is the work of a young man,— a very young man.

As we read it, we see clearly that the eighteen-year-old boy who wrote "Hans of Iceland" during a fever fit in 1821 had no experience of men or things, no experience of ideas, and that he was striving to divine all this.

Every intellectual effort, be it drama, poem, or romance, must contain three ingredients,— what the author has felt, what he has observed, and what he has divined.

In a romance particularly, if it is to be a good one, there must be plenty of feeling and plenty of observation; and those things which are divined must be derived logically, simply, and with no solution of continuity, from those things which are observed and felt.

If we apply this law to "Hans of Iceland," we shall readily grasp the chief defect of the book.

There is but one thing felt in "Hans of Iceland," the young man's love; but one thing observed, the young girl's love. All the rest is a matter of divination,— that is, of invention; for youth, having neither facts nor experience nor models behind it, can only divine by means of its imagination. "Hans of Iceland," therefore, admitting that it deserves classification, is hardly more than a fanciful romance.

When a man's prime is past, when his head is bowed, when he feels compelled to write something more than strange stories to frighten old women and children, when all the rough edges of youth are worn away by the friction of life, he realizes that every invention, every creation, every artistic

divination, must be based upon study, observation, meditation, science, measure, comparison, serious reflection, attentive and constant imitation of Nature, conscientious self-criticism; and the inspiration evolved from these new conditions, far from losing anything, gains broader influence and greater strength. The poet then realizes his true aim. All the vague revery of his earlier years is crystallized, as it were, and converted into thought. This second period of life is usually that of an artist's greatest works. Still young, and yet mature,— this is the precious phase, the intermediate and culminating point, the warm and radiant hour of noon, the moment when there is the least possible shade, and the most light. There are supreme artists who maintain this height all their lives, despite declining years. These are the sovereign geniuses. Shakespeare and Michael Angelo left the impress of youth upon some of their works, the traces of age on none.

To return to the story of which a new edition is now to be published: Such as it is, with its abrupt and breathless action, its characters all of a piece, its barbarous and bungling mannerism, its supercilious and awkward form, its undisguised moods of revery, its varied hues thrown together haphazard with no thought of pleasing the eye, its crude, harsh, and shocking style, utterly destitute of skill or shading, with the countless excesses of every kind committed almost unwittingly throughout, this book represents with tolerable accuracy the period of life at which it was written, and the particular condition of the soul, the imagination, and the heart of a youth in love for the first time, when the commonplace and ordinary obstacles of life are converted into imposing and poetic impediments, when his head is full of heroic fancies which glorify him in his own estimation, when he is already a man in two or three directions, and still a child in a score of others, when he had read Ducray-Duminil at eleven years of age, Auguste la Fontaine at thirteen, Shakespeare at sixteen,— a strange and rapid scale, which leads abruptly, in the matter of literary taste, from the silly to the sentimental, from the sentimental to the sublime.

We give this book back to the world in 1833 as it was written in 1821, because we feel that the work, ingenuous, if nothing else, gives a tolerably faithful picture of the age that produced it.

Moreover, the author, small as may be his place in literature, having undergone the common fate of every writer, great or small, and seen his first works exalted at the expense of the latest, and having heard it declared that he was far from having fulfilled the promise of his youth, deems it his duty, not to oppose to a criticism, perhaps wise and just, objections which might seem suspicious from his lips, but to reprint his first works simply and literally as he wrote them, that his readers may decide, so far as he is concerned, whether it be a step forward or backward that divides " Hans of Iceland " from " Nôtre Dame de Paris."

Paris, May, 1833.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

THE author of this work, from the day he wrote its first page to the day when he placed the happy word "End" at the bottom of the last page, was a prey to the most absurd illusion. Fancying that a composition in four parts deserved some consideration, he wasted his time in seeking a fundamental idea, in working it out, well or ill, according to a plan good or bad, as the case may be, in arranging scenes, combining effects, studying manners and customs as best he might,— in a word, he took his work seriously.

It is only now, when, as it is the wont of authors to end where the reader begins, he was about to elaborate a long preface, which should be the shield of his work, and contain, together with a statement of the moral and literary principles upon which his conception rests, a more or less hasty sketch of the various historical events which it embraces, and a more or less clear picture of the country in which the scene is laid, — it is only now, I say, that he perceives his error; that he recognizes all the insignificance and all the frivolity of the species of work in behalf of which he has so solemnly spoiled so much paper, and that he feels how strangely he was misled when he persuaded himself that this romance was indeed, up to a certain point, a literary production, and that these four fragments formed a book.

He therefore sagely resolved, after making a proper apology, to say nothing at all in this so-called preface, which the publisher will consequently be careful to print in large letters. He will not tell the reader his name or surname, whether he be old or young, married or a bachelor; whether

he has written elegies or fables, odes or satires; whether he means to write tragedies, dramas, or comedies; whether he be the patrician member of some great literary association, or whether he holds a position upon some newspaper,— all things, however, which it would be very interesting to know. He confines himself to stating that the picturesque part of his story has been the object of his especial care; that K's, Y's, H's, and W's abound in it, although he uses these romantic letters with extreme temperance, witness the historic name of Guldenlew, which some chroniclers write Guldenloewe,— a liberty which he has not ventured to allow himself; that there will also be found numerous diphthongs varied with much taste and elegance; and finally, that each chapter is preceded by a strange and mysterious motto, which adds singularly to the interest and gives more expressiveness to each part of the composition.

January, 1823.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

THE author has been informed that a brief preface or introduction to this second edition of his book is absolutely essential. In vain he declared that the four or five paragraphs which escorted the first edition, and with which the publisher persisted in disfiguring it, had already drawn down upon his head the anathemas of one of the most distinguished and honorable of French writers,[1] who accused him of assuming the sour tones of the illustrious Jedediah Cleishbotham, schoolmaster and sexton of the parish of Gandercleugh; in vain he alleged that this brilliant and sensible critic, from dealing severely with an error, would doubtless become merciless, upon a repetition of the same mistake,—in a word, he presented countless equally good reasons for declining to fall into the trap; but better ones must have been brought to bear against them, since he is now writing a second preface, after so bitterly repenting that he wrote the first. While executing this bold resolve, his first thought was to open the second edition with those general and particular views on the subject of romance-writing with which he dared not burden the first. Lost in meditations on this literary and didactic treatise, he was still a prey to that strange intoxication of composition, that brief instant when the author, feeling that he is about to grasp an ideal perfection which, alas, he can never reach, is thrilled with delight at his task; he was, we say, enjoying that period of mental ecstasy when labor is a delight, when the secret possession of the muse seems sweeter than the dazzling pursuit of fame,

[1] M. Charles Nodier, in the "Quotidienne" for March 12, 1823.

when one of his wisest friends waked him suddenly from his dream, his ecstasy, his intoxication, by assuring him that several very great, popular, and influential men of letters considered the dissertation which he was preparing utterly flat, insipid, and unnecessary; that the painful apostleship of criticism with which they were charged in various public pages, imposing upon them the mournful duty of pitilessly hunting down the monster of "romanticism" and bad taste, they were even then busily preparing for certain enlightened and impartial journals a conscientious, analytical, and spicy criticism of the aforesaid forthcoming dissertation. Upon hearing this terrible news, the poor author *obstupuit; steteruntque comæ, et vox faucibus hæsit,*— that is to say, nothing remained but to leave in the limbo whence he was about to rescue it the essay, "virgin and yet unborn," as Jean Jacques Rousseau has it, of which such just and such severe critics had fallen foul. His friend advised him to replace it by a few simple preliminary remarks from the publishers, as he could very properly put into those gentlemen's mouths all the sweet nothings which so delicately tickle an author's ear; nay, he even offered him certain models, taken from highly successful works, some beginning with the words, "The immense popular success of this book," etc.; others thus, "The European fame which this work has won," etc.; or, "It is now superfluous to praise this book, since popular opinion declares that no praise can equal its merit," etc. Although these various formulæ, according to the discreet adviser, were not without their attested virtues, the author did not feel sufficient humility and paternal indifference to expose his work to the disappointment or the demands of the reader who should peruse these magnificent apologies, nor sufficient effrontery to imitate those rustic mountebanks who attract the curious public by displaying a painted crocodile upon a curtain, behind which, on paying their fee, they find nothing but a lizard. He therefore rejected the idea of sounding his own praises through the obliging lips of his publishers. His friend then suggested that he should put into the mouth

of his villainous Icelandic outlaw, by way of a passport, phrases suited to popularize him and render him congenial with the age,— such as delicate jests directed against the nobility, bitter sarcasms upon the clergy, ingenious invectives against nuns, monks, and other monsters of the social order. The author asked nothing better; but it scarcely seemed to him that nobles and monks had any very direct connection with the work in hand. He might, it is true, have borrowed other colors from the same palette, and thrown together a few highly philanthropic pages, in which — always keeping at a prudent distance from the dangerous shoals hidden under the waters of philosophy, and known as the shoals of the Court of Misdemeanors — he might have advanced certain of those truths discovered by the wise for the glory of mankind and the consolation of the dying; namely, that man is but a brute, that the soul is a gas of greater or less density, and that God is nothing; but he thought these incontestable truths very trivial and very hackneyed, and he could scarcely add a drop to the deluge of reasonable morality, atheistic religion, maxims, doctrines, and principles with which we have been flooded for our good for thirty years, in so monstrous a fashion that we might, if it be not irreverent, apply Regnier's verses on a shower,—

> "From out the clouds the rains in such vast torrents pour,
> That thirsty dogs can drink and not their foreheads lower."

Moreover, these lofty themes had no very visible connection with the subject of his story, and he might have been puzzled to find any bond of union leading up to it, although the art of transitions has been singularly simplified, since so many great men have discovered the secret of passing from a stable to a palace direct, and of exchanging without incongruity the policeman's cap for the civic crown.

Recognizing, therefore, that neither his talent nor his learning, "neither his wings nor his beak," as the ingenious Arab poet has it, could furnish him with a preface which would interest his readers, the author resolved merely to offer them a

serious and frank account of the improvements introduced in this second edition.

He must first inform them that the words "second edition" are incorrect, and that the term "first edition" should really be applied to this reprint, inasmuch as the four variously sized bundles of grayish paper blotted with black and white, which the indulgent public has hitherto kindly consented to consider as the four volumes of "Hans of Iceland," were so disfigured with typographic errors by a barbarous printer that the wretched author, on looking over his own production, altered as it was beyond all recognition, was perpetually subjected to the torments of a father whose child returns to him mutilated and tattooed by the hand of an Iroquois from Lake Ontario.

For instance, the type turned a "lion's" voice into a "line," robbed the Dovrefield Mountains of their "peaks" and bestowed upon them "feet," and when the Norse fishers hoped to moor their boat in various "creeks," the printer drove them upon "bricks." Not to weary the reader, the author will pass by in silence all the outrages of this kind which his wounded memory recalls,—

"Manet alto in pectore vulnus."

Suffice it to say that there is no grotesque image, no strange meaning, no absurd idea, no confused figure, no burlesque hieroglyph, which the sedulously stupid ignorance of this enigmatical proof-reader did not make him utter. Alas! every one who ever printed a dozen lines, were it only an invitation to a wedding or a funeral, will feel the deep bitterness of such a sorrow!

The proofs of this reprint have accordingly been read with sedulous care; and the author now ventures to hope, in which he is sustained by one or two close friends, that this romance *redivivus* is worthy to figure among those splendid writings before which "the eleven stars bow low, as before the sun and moon." [1]

[1] Koran.

Should journalists accuse him of making no corrections, he will take the liberty of sending them the proof-sheets of this regenerate work, blackened by minute scrutiny; for it is averred that there is more than one doubting Thomas among them.

The kindly reader will also observe that several dates have been corrected, historical notes added, one or two chapters enriched with new mottoes,— in a word, he will find on every page changes whose extreme importance is to be measured only by that of the entire book.

An impertinent adviser desired a translation in foot-notes of all the Latin phrases with which the learned Spiagudry sprinkles the book, "for the comprehension," adds this personage, "of those masons, tinkers, or hairdressers who edit certain journals wherein 'Hans of Iceland' may chance to be reviewed." The author's anger at such insidious counsel may be imagined. He instantly begged to inform the would-be joker that all journalists, without distinction, are mirrors of courtesy, wisdom, and good faith, and requested him not to insult him by believing him to be one of those ungrateful citizens who are ever ready to address those dictators of taste and genius in this poor verse of an old poet,—

"Keep your own skins, my friends, nor other folk condemn,"

for he is far from thinking that the lion's skin is not the true skin of those popular gentlemen.

Still another friend implored him — for he must conceal nothing from his readers — to put his name on the titlepage of this story, hitherto the neglected child of an unknown father. It must be owned that beyond the pleasure of seeing the half-dozen capital letters which spell out one's name printed in fine black characters upon smooth white paper, there is also a certain charm in displaying it in solitary grandeur upon the back of the cover, as if the work which it adorns, far from being the only monument of the author's genius, were but one of the columns in the imposing temple wherein his genius is some day to spread its wings, but a

slight specimen of his hidden talent and his unpublished glory. It proves that at least he hopes to be a noted and admired writer some day. To triumph over this fresh temptation, the author was forced to muster all his fears lest he should never break through the crowd of scribblers who, even though they waive their anonymity, must ever remain unknown.

As for the hint thrown out by certain amateurs with very delicate ears regarding the uncouth harshness of his Norwegian names, he considers it well founded. He therefore proposes, so soon as he shall be made a member of the Royal Society at Stockholm or the Bergen Academy, to invite the Norwegians to change their language, inasmuch as the hideous jargon which they are whimsical enough to employ wounds the ears of Parisian ladies, and their outlandish names, as rugged as their rocks, produce the same effect upon the sensitive tongue that utters them, as their bear's grease and bark bread would probably have upon the delicate nervous filaments of our palate.

It only remains for him to thank the few persons who have been good enough to read his book through, as is proved by the really tremendous success which it has won; he also expresses his gratitude to those of his fair readers who, he is assured, have formed a certain ideal of the author of "Hans of Iceland" from his book; he is vastly flattered that they should attribute to him red hair, a shaggy beard, and fierce eyes; he is overcome with confusion that they should condescend to do him the honor to suppose that he never cuts his nails; but he entreats them on his knees to rest assured that he never carries his ferocity so far as to devour little children alive; moreover, all these facts will become fixed when his renown has reached the level of that of the authors of "Lolotte and Fanfan" or of "Monsieur Botte," — men of transcendent genius, twins alike in talent and in taste, *arcades ambo;* and when his portrait, *terribiles visu formæ*, and his biography, *domestica facta*, are prefixed to his works.

He was about to close this long epistle, when his publisher, on the point of sending the book to the reviews, requested that he would add a few complimentary notices of his own work, adding, to remove all the author's scruples, that "his writing should not be the means of compromising him, as he would copy these articles himself." This last remark struck the author as extremely touching. Since it seems that in this most luminous age every man considers it his duty to enlighten his neighbor as to his own qualities and personal perfections, concerning which none can be so well informed as their possessor, as, moreover, this last temptation is a strong one, the author thinks it his duty, in case he should yield to it, to warn the public not to believe more than half of what the press may say of his work.

April, 1823.

HANS OF ICELAND

I

Did you see it? did you see it? did you see it? Oh! did you see it? — Who saw it? Who did see it? For mercy's sake, who saw it?

STERNE: *Tristram Shandy.*

"THAT'S what comes of falling in love, Neighbor Niels. Poor Guth Stersen would not be stretched out yonder on that great black slab, like a starfish forgotten by the tide, if she had kept her mind on mending her father's boat and patching his nets. Saint Usuph, the fisher, console our old friend in his affliction!"

"And her lover," added a shrill, tremulous voice, "Gill Stadt, that fine young man beside her, would not be there now, if instead of making love to Guth and seeking his luck in those accursed Roeraas mines, he had stayed at home and rocked his little brother's cradle, under the smoky cross-beams of his mother's hut."

Neighbor Niels, whom the first speaker addressed, interrupted: "Your memory is growing old along with yourself, Mother Olly. Gill never had a brother, and that makes poor Widow Stadt's grief all the harder to bear, for her home is now left utterly desolate; if she looks up to heaven for consolation, she sees nought but her old roof, where still hangs the cradle of her son, grown to be a tall young man, and dead."

"Poor mother!" replied old Olly, "it was the young man's own fault. Why should he go to Roeraas to be a miner?"

"I do believe," said Niels, "that those infernal mines rob

us of a man for every escalin's [1] worth of copper which we get out of them. What do you think, Father Braal?"

"Miners are fools," replied the fisherman. "If he would live, the fish should not leave the water. Man should not enter the bowels of the earth."

"But," asked a young man in the crowd, "how if Gill Stadt had to work in the mines to win his sweetheart?"

"A man should never risk his life," interrupted Olly, "for affections which are far from being worth a life, or filling it. A pretty wedding-bed Gill earned for his Guth!"

"So then that young woman," inquired a curious bystander, "drowned herself in despair at the death of this young man?"

"Who says so?" loudly exclaimed a soldier, pushing his way through the crowd. "That young girl, whom I knew well, was indeed engaged to marry a young miner who was lately crushed by falling rocks in the underground tunnels of Storwaadsgrube, near Roeraas; but she was also the sweetheart of one of my mates, and as she was going to Munkholm secretly, day before yesterday, to celebrate with her lover the death of her betrothed, her boat capsized on a reef, and she was drowned."

A confused sound of voices arose: "Impossible, master soldier," cried the old women. The young ones were silent; and Neighbor Niels maliciously reminded fisher Braal of his serious statement: "That's what comes of falling in love!"

The soldier was about to lose his temper with his opponents; he had already called them "old witches from the cave of Quiragoth," and they were not disposed to bear so grave an insult patiently, when a sharp and imperious voice, crying "Silence, silence, you old fools!" put an end to the dispute. All was still, as when the sudden crow of a cock is heard amid the cackling of the hens.

Before relating the rest of the scene, it may be well to describe the spot where it occurred. It was — as the reader

[1] A small coin worth twelve and a half cents. The name is still in use in Louisiana.

has doubtless guessed — one of those gloomy structures which public pity and social forethought devote to unknown corpses, the last asylum of the dead, whose lives were usually sad ones; where the careless spectator, the surly or kindly observer gather, and friends often meet tearful relatives, whom long and unendurable anxiety has robbed of all but one sad hope. At the period now remote, and in the uncivilized region to which I have carried my reader, there had as yet been no attempt, as in our cities of gold and mud, to make these resting-places into ingeniously forbidding or elegantly funereal edifices. Daylight did not fall through tomb-shaped openings, into artistically sculptured vaults, upon beds which seem as if the guardian of the place were anxious to leave the dead some of the conveniences of life, and the pillow seems arranged for sleep. If the keeper's door were left ajar, the eye, wearied with gazing upon hideous, naked corpses, had not as now the pleasure of resting upon elegant furniture and happy children. Death was there in all its deformity, in all its horror; and there was no attempt to deck its fleshless skeleton with ribbons and gewgaws.

The room in which our actors stood was spacious and dark, which made it seem still larger; it was lighted only by a broad, low door opening upon the port of Throndhjem, and a rough hole in the ceiling, through which a dull, white light fell, mingled with rain, hail, or snow, according to the weather, upon the corpses lying directly under it. The room was divided by an iron railing, breast-high, running across it from side to side. The public entered the outer portion through the low door; in the inner part were six long black granite slabs, arranged abreast and parallel to each other. A small side door served to admit the keeper and his assistant to either section, their rooms occupying the rear of the building, close to the water. The miner and his betrothed occupied two granite beds; decomposition had already begun its work upon he young woman's body, showing itself in large blue and purple spots running along her limbs on the line of the blood-vessels. Gill's features were stern and set; but

his body was so horribly mutilated that it was impossible to judge whether his beauty were really so great as old Olly declared.

It was before these disfigured remains, in the midst of the mute crowd, that the conversation which we have faithfully interpreted, began.

A tall, withered old man, sitting with folded arms and bent head upon a broken stool in the darkest corner of the room, had apparently paid no heed until the moment when he rose suddenly, exclaiming, "Silence, silence, you old fools!" and seized the soldier by the arm.

All were hushed; the soldier turned and broke into a burst of laughter at the sight of his strange interrupter, whose pale face, thin greasy locks, long fingers, and complete costume of reindeer leather amply justified this mirthful reception. But a clamor arose from the crowd of women, for a moment confounded: "It is the keeper of the Spladgest![1] — That infernal doorkeeper to the dead! — That diabolical Spiagudry! — That accursed sorcerer!"

"Silence, you old fools, silence! If this be the witches' Sabbath, hasten away and find your broomsticks; if you don't, they'll fly off without you. Let this worthy descendant of the God Thor alone."

Then Spiagudry, striving to assume a gracious expression, addressed the soldier: "You say, my good fellow, that this wretched woman —"

"Old rascal!" muttered Olly; "yes, we are all 'wretched women,' to him, because our bodies, if they fall into his claws, only bring him thirty escalins' reward, while he gets forty for the paltry carcass of a man."

"Silence, old women!" repeated Spiagudry. "In truth, these daughters of the Devil are like their kettles; when they wax warm, they must needs sing. Tell me, my valiant king of the sword, your comrade, this Guth's lover, will doubtless kill himself in despair at her loss, won't he?"

Here burst forth the long-repressed storm. "Do you hear

[1] Name of the Throndhjem morgue.

the miscreant,— the old Pagan!" cried twenty shrill, discordant voices. "He would fain see one less man living, for the sake of the forty escalins that a dead body brings him."

"And what if I would?" replied the keeper of the Spladgest. "Doesn't our gracious king and master, Christian V., — may Saint Hospitius bless him! — declare himself the natural guardian of all miners, so that when they die he may enrich his royal treasury with their paltry leavings?"

"You honor the king," answered fisher Braal, "by comparing the royal treasury to the strong-box of your charnel-house, and him to yourself, Neighbor Spiagudry."

"Neighbor, indeed!" said the keeper, shocked by such familiarity. "Your neighbor! say rather your host! since it may easily chance some day, my dear boat-dweller, that I shall have to lend you one of my six stone beds for a week. Besides," he added, with a laugh, "if I spoke of that soldier's death, it was merely from a desire to see the perpetuation of the custom of suicide for the sake of those great and tragic passions which ladies are wont to inspire."

"Well, you tall corpse and keeper of corpses," said the soldier, "what are you after, with your amiable grimace, which looks so much like the last smile of a man who has been hanged?"

"Capital, my valiant fellow!" replied Spiagudry. "I always felt that there was more wit beneath the helmet of Constable Thurn, who conquered the Devil with his sword and his tongue, than under the mitre of Bishop Isleif, who wrote the history of Iceland, or the square cap of Professor Shoenning, who described our cathedral."

"In that case, if you will take my advice, my old bag of leather, you will give up the revenues of the charnel-house, and go and sell yourself to the viceroy's museum of curiosities at Bergen. I swear to you, by Belphegor, that they pay their weight in gold there for rare beasts; but say, what do you want with me?"

"When the bodies brought here are found in the water, we have to give half the reward to the fisherman. I was going

to ask you, therefore, illustrious heir to Constable Thurn, if you would persuade your unfortunate comrade not to drown himself, but to choose some other mode of death; it can't matter much to him, and he would not wish to wrong the unhappy Christian who must entertain his corpse, if the loss of Guth should really drive him to that act of despair."

"You are quite mistaken, my charitable and hospitable friend. My comrade will not have the pleasure of occupying an apartment in your tempting tavern with its six beds. Don't you suppose he has already consoled himself with another Valkyria for the death of that girl? He had long been tired of your Guth, by my beard!"

At these words, the storm, which Spiagdury had for a moment drawn upon his own head, again burst more furiously than ever upon the luckless soldier.

"What, miserable scamp!" shrieked the old women; "is that the way you forget us? And yet we love such good-for-nothings!"

The young girls still kept silence. Some of them even thought — greatly against their will, of course — that this graceless fellow was very good-looking.

"Oh, ho!" said the soldier; "has the witches' Sabbath come round again? Beelzebub's punishment is frightful indeed if he be condemned to hear such choruses once a week!"

No one can say how this fresh squall would have ended, if general attention had not at this moment been utterly absorbed by a noise from without. The uproar increased steadily, and presently a swarm of little ragged boys entered the Spladgest, tumultuously shouting and crowding about a covered bier carried by two men.

"Where does that come from?" the keeper asked the bearers.

"From Urchtal Sands."

"Oglypiglap!" shouted Spiagudry.

One of the side doors opened, a little man of Lappish race, dressed in leather, entered, and signed to the bearers to follow him. Spiagudry accompanied them, and the door

closed before the curious crowd had time to guess, by the length of the body on the bier, whether it were a man or a woman.

This subject still occupied all their thoughts, when Spiagudry and his assistant reappeared in the second compartment, carrying the corpse of a man, which they placed upon one of the granite couches.

"It's a long time since I've handled such handsome clothes," said Oglypiglap; then, shaking his head and standing on tiptoe, he hung above the dead man the elegant uniform of a captain in the army. The corpse's head was disfigured, and his limbs were covered with blood; the keeper sprinkled the body several times from an old broken pail.

"By Saint Beelzebub!" cried the soldier, "it is an officer of my regiment. Let me see; can it be Captain Bollar,—from grief at his uncle's death? Bah! he is the heir. Baron Randmer? He lost his estate at cards yesterday, but he will win it back to-morrow, with his adversary's castle. Can it be Captain Lory, whose dog was drowned, or Paymaster Stunck, whose wife was unfaithful to him? But, really, I don't see why he should blow out his brains for that!"

The crowd steadily increased. Just at this instant, a young man who was crossing the wharf, seeing the mob of people, dismounted from his horse, handed the bridle to the servant behind him, and entered the Spladgest. He wore a simple traveling dress, was armed with a sword, and wrapped in a large green cloak; a black plume, fastened to his hat by a diamond buckle, fell over his noble face and waved to and fro upon his lofty brow, shaded by chestnut hair; his boots and spurs, soiled with mud, showed that he had come a long distance.

As he entered, a short, thick-set man, also wrapped in a cloak and hiding his hands in huge gloves, replied to the soldier.

"And who told you that he killed himself? That man no more committed suicide, I'll be bound, than the roof of your cathedral set itself on fire."

As the double-edged sword makes two wounds, this phrase gave birth to two answers.

"Our cathedral!" said Niels; "it is covered with copper now. It was that miserable Hans who set it on fire to make work for the miners, one of whom was his favorite Gill Stadt, whom you see lying yonder."

"What the devil!" cried the soldier, in his turn; "do you dare tell me, the second musketeer in the Munkholm garrison, that that man did not blow out his brains!"

"He was murdered," coldly replied the little fellow.

"Just listen to the oracle! Go along with you. Your little gray eyes can see no better than your hands do under the big gloves with which you cover them in the middle of the summer."

The little man's eyes flashed.

"Soldier, pray to your patron saint that these hands may never leave their mark upon your face!"

"Oh! — enough of this!" cried the soldier, in a rage. Then, pausing suddenly, he said: "No, there must be no word of a duel before dead men."

The little man growled a few words in a foreign tongue, and vanished.

A voice cried out: "He was found on Urchtal Sands."

"On Urchtal Sands?" said the soldier; "Captain Dispolsen was to land there this morning, from Copenhagen."

"Captain Dispolsen has not yet reached Munkholm," said another voice.

"They say that Hans of Iceland haunts those sands just now," added a fourth.

"Then it is possible that this may be the captain," said the soldier, "if Hans was the murderer; for we all know that the Icelander murders in so devilish a fashion that his victims often seem to be suicides."

"What sort of man is this Hans?" asked some one.

"He is a giant," said one.

"He is a dwarf," said another.

"Has nobody seen him, then?" put in a voice.

"Those who see him for the first time, see him for the last time also."

"Hush!" said old Olly; "they say there are but three persons who ever exchanged human speech with him,— that reprobate of a Spiagudry, Widow Stadt, and — but he had a sad life and a sad death — that poor Gill, who lies yonder. Hush!"

"Hush!" was repeated on all sides.

"Now," suddenly exclaimed the soldier, "I am sure that this is indeed Captain Dispolsen. I recognize the steel chain which our prisoner, old Schumacker, gave him when he went away."

The young man with the black plume broke the silence abruptly: "Are you sure it is Captain Dispolsen?"

"Sure, by the merits of Saint Beelzebub!" said the soldier.

The young man left the room hurriedly.

"Get me a boat for Munkholm," he said to his servant.

"But, the general, sir?"

"Take the horses to him. I will follow to-morrow. Am I my own master, or not? Come, night is falling, and I am in haste. A boat!

The servant obeyed, and for some time stood watching his young master as he moved away from the shore.

II

I will sit by you while you tell me some pleasant tale to pass away the time.— MATURIN: *Bertram.*

THE reader is already aware that we are at Throndhjem, one of the four chief cities in Norway, although not the residence of the viceroy. At the date of this story (1699) the kingdom of Norway was still united to Denmark, and governed by a viceroy whose seat was in Bergen, a larger, handsomer, and more southerly town than Throndhjem, in

spite of the disagreeable nickname attached to it by the famous Admiral Tromp.

Throndhjem offers a pleasant prospect as you approach it by the fjord to which the city gives its name. The harbor is quite large, although it cannot be entered easily in all weathers. At this time it resembled nothing so much as a long canal, lined on the right by Danish and Norwegian ships, and on the left by foreign vesels, as prescribed by law. In the background lay the town, situated on a well-cultivated plain, and crowned by the lofty spires of the cathedral. This church — one of the finest pieces of Gothic architecture, as we may judge from Professor Shoenning's book, so learnedly quoted by Spiagudry, which describes it as it was before repeated fires had laid it waste — bore upon its highest pinnacle the episcopal cross, the distinctive sign that it was the cathedral of the Luthern bishop of Throndhjem. Beyond the town, in the blue distance, were the slender white peaks of the Kiölen Mountains, like the sharp-pointed ornaments on an antique crown.

In the middle of the harbour, within cannon-shot of the shore, upon a mass of rocks lashed by the waves, rose the lonely fortress of Munkholm, a gloomy prison which then held a prisoner celebrated for the splendor of his long prosperity and for his sudden disgrace.

Schumacker, born in an obscure station, was loaded with favors by his master, then hurled from the chair of the Lord High Chancellor of Denmark and Norway to the traitor's bench, dragged to the scaffold, and thence by royal clemency cast into a lonely dungeon at the extreme end of the two kingdoms. His creatures had overthrown him, but gave him no right to inveigh against their ingratitude. How could he complain if the steps gave way beneath him, which he had built so high for his own aggrandizement only?

The founder of the Danish nobility, from the depth of his exile, saw the grandees whom he had created share his own dignities between them. Count d'Ahlefeld, his mortal enemy, succeeded him as chancellor; General Arensdorf, as

earl-marshal, distributed military titles, and Bishop Spollyson took the position of inspector of universities. The only one of his foes who did not owe his rise to him was Count Ulric Frederic Guldenlew, natural son of King Frederic III., and now viceroy of Norway. He was the most generous of all.

Toward the sombre rock of Munkholm the boat of the youth with the black plume now slowly moved. The sun sank rapidly behind the lonely fortress, whose walls cut off its last beams, already so horizontal that the peasant on the distant eastern hills of Larsynn might see beside him on the heather the faint shadow of the sentinel keeping his watch on Munkholm's highest tower.

III

Ah! my heart could receive no more painful wound! . . . A young man destitute of morals. . . . He dared gaze at her! His glance soiled her purity. Claudia! The mere thought drives me mad.—Lessing.

"ANDREW, go and order them to ring the curfew bell in half an hour. Let Sorsyll relieve Duckness at the portcullis, and Malvidius keep watch on the platform of the great tower. Let a careful lookout be kept in the direction of the Lion of Schleswig donjon. Do not forget to fire the cannon at seven o'clock, as a signal to lift the harbor chain. But no, we must wait a little for Captain Dispolsen; better light the signals instead, and see if the Walderhog beacon is lighted, as I ordered to-day. Be sure to keep refreshments ready for the captain. And, I forgot,— give Toric-Belfast, the second musketeer of the regiment, two days' arrest; he has been absent all day."

So said the sergeant-at-arms beneath the black and smoky roof of the Munkholm guard-house, in the low tower over the outer castle gate.

The soldiers addressed left their cards or bed to carry out

his orders; then silence was restored. At this moment the measured beat of oars was heard outside.

"That must be Captain Dispolsen at last!" said the sergeant, opening the tiny grated window which looked out upon the gulf.

A boat was just landing at the foot of the iron gate.

"Who goes there?" cried the sergeant in hoarse tones.

"Open!" was the answer; "peace and safety."

"There is no admittance here. Have you a passport?"

"Yes."

"I must make sure of that. If you lie, by the merits of my patron saint, you shall taste the waters of the gulf!" Then, closing the lattice and turning away, he added: "It is not the captain yet."

A light shone behind the iron gate. The rusty bolts creaked, the grating rose, the gate opened, and the sergeant examined a parchment handed him by the newcomer.

"Pass in," said he. "But stay," he added hastily, "leave your hat-buckle outside. No one is allowed to enter the prisons of the State wearing jewels. The order declares that 'the king and the members of the royal family, the viceroy and members of the vice-regal family, the bishop, and the officers of the garrison, are alone excepted.' You come under none of these heads, do you?"

The young man, without reply, removed the forbidden ornament, and flung it to the fisherman who brought him thither, in payment of his services; the latter, fearing lest he might repent his generosity, made haste to put a broad expanse of sea between the benefactor and his benefit.

While the sergeant, grumbling at the chancellor's imprudence in being so prodigal with his passes, replaced the clumsy bars, and while the lingering sound of his heavy boots still echoed on the stairs leading to the guard-house, the young man, throwing his mantle over his shoulder, hurriedly crossed the dark vault of the low tower, the long parade-ground, and the ordnance-room, where lay a few old dismantled culverins, still to be seen in the Copenhagen museum, all

nearer approach to which was forbidden by the warning cry of a sentinel. He reached the great portcullis, which was raised on sight of his parchment. Thence, followed by a soldier, he crossed diagonally, without hesitation, and like one familiar with the place, one of the four square courts which skirt the great circular yard, in whose midst rose the huge round rock upon which stood the donjon, called the castle of the Lion of Schleswig, from the forced sojourn there of Jothan the Lion, Duke of Schleswig, held captive by his brother, Rolf the Dwarf.

It is not our purpose to give a description of Munkholm keep, the more so that the reader, confined in a State prison, might fear that he could not escape through the garden. He would be mistaken; for the castle of the Lion of Schleswig, meant for prisoners of distinction only, among other conveniences affords them the pleasure of a walk in a sort of wild garden of considerable extent, where clumps of holly, a few ancient yews, and some dark pines grow among the rocks around the lofty prison, inside an enclosure of thick walls and huge towers.

Reaching the foot of the round rock, the young man climbed the rude winding steps which lead to the foot of one of the towers of the enclosure, having a postern below, which served as the entrance to the keep. Here he blew a loud blast on a copper horn handed to him by the warder of the great portcullis. "Come in, come in!" eagerly exclaimed a voice from within; "it must be that confounded captain!"

As the postern swung open, the new-comer saw, in a dimly lighted Gothic apartment, a young officer stretched carelessly upon a pile of cloaks and reindeer-skins, beside one of the three-beaked lamps which our ancestors used to hang from the rose-work of their ceilings, and which at this moment stood upon the ground. The elegance and indeed excessive luxury of his dress was in strong contrast with the bare walls and rude furniture; he held a book, and turned slightly toward the new-comer.

"Is it you, Captain? How are you, Captain? You little

suspected that you were keeping a man waiting who has not the pleasure of your acquaintance; but our acquaintance will soon be made, will it not? Begin by receiving my commiseration upon your return to this venerable castle. Short as my stay here may be, I shall soon be about as gay as the owl nailed at donjon doors to serve as scarecrow, and when I return to Copenhagen, to my sister's wedding-feast, the deuce take me if four women out of a hundred will know me! Tell me, are the knots of pink ribbon at the hem of my doublet still in fashion? Has any one translated a new novel by that Frenchwoman, Mademoiselle Scudéry? I have 'Clelia;' I suppose people are still reading it in Copenhagen. It is my code of gallantry, now that I am forced to sigh remote from so many bright eyes; for, bright as they are, the eyes of our young prisoner — you know who I mean — have never a message for me. Ah! were it not for my father's orders! . . . I must tell you in confidence, Captain, that my father,— but don't mention it,— charged me to — you understand me — Schumacker's daughter. But I have my labor for my pains; that pretty statue is not a woman; she weeps all day long and never looks at me."

The young man, unable thus far to interrupt the officer's extreme volubility, uttered an exclamation of surprise: —

"What! What did you say? Charged you to seduce the daughter of that unfortunate Schumacker!"

"Seduce? Well, so be it, if that is the name you give it now in Copenhagen; but I defy the Devil himself to succeed. Day before yesterday, being on duty, I put on for her express benefit a superb French ruff sent direct from Paris. Would you believe that she never even raised her eyes to look at me, although I passed through her room three or four times clinking my new spurs, whose rowels are no bigger than a Lombardy ducat? That's the newest fashion, isn't it?"

"Heavens! Heavens!" said the young man, striking his forehead; "but this confounds me!"

"I thought it would!" rejoined the officer, mistaking the

meaning of the remark. "Not to take the least notice of me! It is incredible, and yet it is true."

The young man strode up and down the room in violent excitement.

"Won't you take some refreshment, Captain Dispolsen?" cried the officer.

The young man started.

"I am not Captain Dispolsen."

"What!" said the officer angrily, sitting up as he spoke; "and pray who are you, then, that venture to introduce yourself here at this hour?"

The young man displayed his papers.

"I wish to see Count Griffenfeld,— I would say, your prisoner."

"The Count! the Count!" muttered the officer in some displeasure. "But to be sure, this paper is in order; here is the signature of Vice-Chancellor Grummond de Knud. 'Admit the bearer to visit all the royal prisons at any hour and at any time.' Grummond de Knud is brother to old General Levin de Knud, who is in command at Throndhjem, and you must know that this old general had the bringing up of my future brother-in-law."

"Thanks for these family details, Lieutenant. Don't you think you have told me enough of them."

"The impertinent fellow is right," said the lieutenant, biting his lips. "Hullo, there, officer, officer of the tower! Escort this stranger to Schumacker, and do not scold if I have taken down your lamp with three beaks and but one wick.

"I was curious to examine an article which is doubtless the work of Sciold the Pagan or Havar the giant-killer; and besides it is no longer the fashion to hang anything but crystal chandeliers from the ceiling."

With these words, as the young man and his escort crossed the deserted donjon garden, the martyr to fashion resumed the thread of the love adventures of the Amazonian Clelia and Horatius the One-eyed.

IV

Benvolio. Where the devil should this Romeo be? Came he not home to-night?

Mercutio. Not to his father's; I spoke with his man.

SHAKESPEARE: *Romeo and Juliet.*

A MAN and two horses entered the courtyard of the palace of the governor of Throndhjem. The horseman dismounted, shaking his head with a discontented air. He was about to lead the two animals to the stable, when his arm was seized, and a voice cried: "How! You here alone, Poël! And your master,— where is your master?"

It was old General Levin de Knud, who, seeing from his window the young man's servant and the empty saddle, descended quickly, and fastened upon the groom a gaze which betrayed even more alarm than his question.

"Your excellency," said Poël, with a low bow, "my master has left Throndhjem."

"What! has he been here, and gone again without seeing his general, without greeting his old friend! And how long since?"

"He arrived this evening, and left this evening."

"This evening,— this very evening! But where did he stay? Where has he gone?"

"He stopped at the Spladgest, and has embarked for Munkholm."

"Ah! I supposed he was at the antipodes. But what is his business at that castle? What took him to the Spladgest? Just like my knight-errant. After all, I am rather to blame, for why did I give him such a bringing up? I wanted him to be free in spite of his rank."

"Therefore he is no slave to etiquette," said Poël.

"No; but he is to his own caprice. Well, he will doubtless return. Rest and refresh yourself, Poël. Tell me," and the general's face took on an expression of solicitude, "tell

me, Poël, have you been doing much running up and down?"

"General, we came here direct from Bergen. My master was melancholy."

"Melancholy! Why, what can have occurred between him and his father? Is he averse to this marriage?"

"I do not know. But they say that his Serene Highness insists upon it."

"Insists! You say, Poël, that the viceroy insists upon this match! But why should he insist unless Ordener refused?"

"I don't know, your Excellency. He seems sad."

"Sad! Do you know how his father received him?"

"The first time, it was at the camp, near Bergen. His Serene Highness said, 'I seldom see you, my son.' 'So much the better for me, my lord and father,' replied my master, 'if you take note of it.' Then he gave his Grace certain details about his travels in the North, and his Grace said: 'It is well.' Next day my master came back from the palace and said: 'They want me to marry; but I must consult my second father, General Levin.' I saddled the horses, and here we are."

"Really, my good Poël," said the general, in trembling tones, "did he really call me his second father?"

"Yes, your Excellency."

"Woe to me if this marriage distresses him, for I will sooner incur the king's displeasure than lend myself to it. And yet, the daughter of the Lord High Chancellor of both kingdoms — By the way, Poël, does Ordener know that his future mother-in-law, Countess d'Ahlefeld, has been here incognito since yesterday, and that the count is expected?"

"I don't know, General."

"Oh, yes," thought the old governor, "he knows it; for why else should he beat a retreat the instant that he arrived?"

Upon this, the general, with a friendly wave of the hand to Poël, and a salute to the sentinel who presented arms to him, returned in anxious mood to the quarters which he had left in anxious mood.

V

It seemed as if every emotion has stirred his heart, and had also deserted it; nothing remained but the mournful, piercing gaze of a man thoroughly familiar with men, who saw, at a glance, the aim and object of all things.— SCHILLER: *The Visions.*

WHEN, after leading the stranger along the winding stairs and lofty halls of the donjon of the Lion of Schleswig, the officer finally threw open the door of the room occupied by the man he sought, the first words that fell upon his ear were once more these: "Has Captain Dispolsen come at last?"

The speaker was an old man, seated with his back to the door, his elbows on a writing-table, his head buried in his hands. He wore a black woollen gown, and above a bed at one end of the room hung a broken escutcheon, around which were grouped the broken collars of the orders of the Elephant and the Dannebrog; a count's coronet, reversed, was fastened under the shield, and two fragments of a hand of Justice, tied crosswise, completed the strange ornamentation. The old man was Schumacker.

"No, my Lord," replied the officer; then he said to the stranger, "This is the prisoner;" and leaving them together, he closed the door, without heeding the shrill voice of the old man, who exclaimed: "If it is not the captain, I will see no one."

At these words the stranger remained by the door; and the prisoner, thinking himself alone,— for he had turned away,— fell back into his silent revery. Suddenly he exclaimed: "The captain has assuredly forsaken and betrayed me! Men,— men are like the icicle which an Arab took for a diamond; he hid it carefully in his wallet, and when he looked for it again he found not even a drop of water."

"I am no such man," said the stranger.

Schumacker rose quickly. "Who is here? Who overhears me? Is it some miserable tool of that Guldenlew?"

"Speak no evil of the viceroy, my lord Count."

"Lord Count! Do you address me thus to flatter me? You have your labor for your pains; I am powerful no longer."

"He who speaks to you never knew you in your day of power, and is none the less your friend."

"Because he still hopes to gain something from me; those memories of the unhappy which linger in the minds of men are to be measured by the hopes of future gain."

"I am the one who should complain, noble Count; for I remember you, and you have forgotten me. I am Ordener."

A flash of joy lit up the old man's sad eyes, and a smile which he could not repress parted his white beard, as when a sunbeam breaks through a cloud.

"Ordener! Welcome, traveller Ordener! A thousand prayers for the happiness of the traveller who remembers the prisoner!"

"But," inquired Ordener, "had you really forgotten me?"

"I had forgotten you," said Schumacker, resuming his sombre mood, "as we forget the breeze which refreshes us and passes by; we are fortunate if it does not become a whirlwind to destroy us."

"Count Griffenfeld," rejoined the young man, "did you not count upon my return?"

"Old Schumacker did not count upon it; but there is a maiden here, who reminded me this very day that it was a year on the 8th of last May, since you went away."

Ordener started.

"Heavens! Can it be your Ethel, noble Count?"

"Who else?"

"Your daughter, my Lord, has deigned to count the months of my absence! Oh, how many dreary days I have passed! I have traversed Norway from Christiania to Wardhus; but my journeyings always tended back toward Throndhjem."

"Use your freedom, young man, while you may. But tell me who you are. I would like, Ordener, to know you by some other name. The son of one of my mortal foes is called Ordener."

"Perhaps, my lord Count, this mortal foe feels greater kindness for you than you for him."

"You evade my question; but keep your secret. I might learn that the fruit which quenches my thirst is a poison which will destroy me."

"Count!" cried Ordener, angrily; "Count!" he repeated, in tones of pity and reproach.

"Why should I trust you," replied Schumacker,—"you who to my very face defend the merciless Guldenlew?"

"The viceroy," gravely interrupted the young man, "has just ordered that for the future you shall be free and unguarded within the entire precinct of the Lion of Schleswig keep. This news I learned at Bergen, and you will doubtless soon hear it from headquarters."

"This is a favor for which I dared not hope, and I thought you were the only person to whom I had mentioned my wish. So they lessen the weight of my chains as that of my years increases; and when old age renders me helpless, they will probably tell me, 'You are free.'"

So saying the old man smiled bitterly, and added: "And you, young man, do you still cling to your foolish ideas of independence?"

"If I had not those same foolish ideas, I should not be here."

"How did you come to Trondhjem?"

"Why, on horseback."

"How did you reach Munkholm?"

"By boat."

"Poor fool! You think yourself free, and yet you only leave a horse for a boat. It is not your own limbs that carry out your wishes; it is a brute beast, it is material matter; and you call that free will!"

"I force animate beings to obey me."

"To assume a right to the obedience of certain beings is to give others a right to command you. Independence exists only in isolation."

"You do not love mankind, noble Count?"

The old man laughed sadly. "I weep that I am a man, and I laugh at him who would console me. You will yet learn, if you do not already know, that misfortune creates suspicion as prosperity does ingratitude. Tell me, since you come from Bergen, what favoring winds blow upon Captain Dispolsen. Some good fortune must have befallen him, that he forgets me."

Ordener looked grave and embarrassed.

"Dispolsen, my lord Count? I come here to-day to talk to you of him. I know that he possessed your entire confidence."

"You know?" broke in the prisoner, uneasily. "You are mistaken. No one on earth has my confidence. Dispolsen has, it is true, my papers, and very important papers too. He went to Copenhagen, to the king, for me. I may even confess that I reckoned more surely upon him than upon any one else, for in the days of my prosperity I never did him a service."

"Well, noble Count, I saw him to-day —"

"Your distress tells me the rest; he is a traitor."

"He is dead."

"Dead!"

The prisoner folded his arms and bent his head, then looking up at the young man, said: "I told you some good fortune must have befallen him!"

His eye turned to the wall, where the signs of his former grandeur hung, and he waved his hand, as if to dismiss the witness of a grief which he strove to conquer.

"I do not pity him; 'tis but one man the less. Nor do I pity myself; what have I to lose? But my daughter,— my unfortunate daughter! I shall be a victim of this infernal plot; and what is to become of her, if her father is taken from her?"

He turned quickly to Ordener. "How did he die? Where did you see him?"

"I saw him at the Spladgest. No one knows whether he died by suicide or by the hand of an assassin."

"That is now all-important. If he was murdered, I know who dealt the blow. Then all is lost. He bore proofs of the conspiracy against me. Those proofs might have saved me and ruined them! Unhappy Ethel!"

"My lord Count," said Ordener, bowing, "to-morrow I will tell you whether he was murdered."

Schumacker, without answering, cast on Ordener, as he left the room, a look of quiet despair more terrible than the calm of death.

Ordener found himself in the prisoner's empty ante-chamber, not knowing which way to turn. Night was far advanced and the room was dark. He opened a door at haphazard and entered a vast corridor lighted only by the moon, which moved rapidly through pale clouds. Its misty beams fell now and again upon the long, narrow glass windows, and painted on the opposite wall what seemed a procession of ghosts, appearing and disappearing simultaneously in the depths of the passage. The young man slowly crossed himself, and walked toward a light which shone faintly at the end of the corridor.

A door stood ajar; a young girl knelt in a Gothic oratory, at the foot of a bare altar, reciting in low tones litanies to the Virgin,— simple and sublime aspirations, in which the soul that rises toward the Mother of Seven Sorrows asks nothing but her prayers.

The young girl was dressed in black crape and white gauze, as if to show at a glance that her days had hitherto been passed in grief and innocence. Even in this modest attitude she bore the impress of a strange nature. Her eyes and her long hair were black (a very rare beauty in the North); her eyes, raised to heaven, seemed kindled with rapture rather than dimmed by meditation. She seemed a virgin from the shores of Cyprus or the banks of the Tiber, clad in

the fanciful disguise of one of Ossian's characters and prostrate before the wooden cross and stone altar of Christ Jesus.

Ordener started and almost fell, for he recognized the devotee.

She was praying for her father, for the mighty who had fallen, for the old and desolate prisoner; and she recited aloud the psalm of the deliverance out of Egypt. She prayed for another as well, but Ordener did not hear his name. He did not hear it, for she did not utter it; she merely recited the canticle of the Sulamite, the bride who awaits her bridegroom and the return of her beloved.

Ordener stepped back into the gallery; he respected the maiden holding converse with the sky. Prayer is a great mystery, and his heart was involuntarily filled with unknown but profane ecstasy.

The door of the oratory was gently closed. Soon a light borne by a white figure moved toward him through the darkness. He stood still, for he felt one of the strongest emotions of his life; he leaned against the gloomy wall; his body was weak, and his limbs trembled beneath him. In the silence of his entire being the beating of his heart was plainly audible to his own ear.

As the young girl passed, she heard the rustle of a garment, and a quick, sudden gasp, and cried out in terror.

Ordener rushed forward. With one arm he supported her, with the other he vainly tried to grasp the lamp which she had dropped, and which went out.

"It is I," he said softly.

"It is Ordener!" said the girl; for the last echo of that voice, which she had not heard for a year, still rang in her ear.

And the moon, passing by, revealed the joy of her fair face. Then she repeated, in timid confusion, freeing herself from the young man's arms, "It is my lord Ordener."

"Himself, Countess Ethel."

"Why do you call me countess?"

"Why do you call me my lord?"

The young girl smiled, and was silent. The young man was silent, and sighed. She was first to break the silence.

"How came you here?"

"Pardon me, if my presence disturbs you. I came to see the count, your father."

"Then," said Ethel, in a changed tone, "you only came for my father's sake."

The young man bent his head, for these words seemed to him unjust.

"I suppose you have been in Throndhjem a long time," she continued reproachfully, "I suppose you have been here a long time already? Your absence from this castle cannot have seemed long to you."

Ordener, deeply wounded, made no reply.

"You are right," said the prisoner, in a voice which trembled with anger and distress; "but," she added, in a haughty tone, "I hope, my lord Ordener, that you did not overhear my prayers?"

"Countess," reluctantly replied the young man, "I did hear you."

"Ah! my lord Ordener, it was far from courteous to listen."

"I did not listen, noble Countess," said Ordener in a low voice; "I overheard you accidentally."

"I prayed for my father," rejoined the girl looking steadily at him, as if expecting an answer to this very simple statement.

Ordener was silent.

"I also prayed," she continued uneasily, and apparently anxious as to the effect which her words might produce upon him, "I also prayed for some one who bears your name, for the son of the viceroy, Count Guldenlew. For we should pray for every one, even our persecutors."

And she blushed for she thought she was lying; but she was offended with the young man, and she fancied that she had mentioned him in her prayer; she had only named him in her heart.

"Ordener Guldenlew is very unfortunate, noble lady, if you reckon him among the number of your persecutors; and yet he is very fortunate to possess a place in your prayers."

"Oh, no," said Ethel, troubled and alarmed by his cold manner, "no, I did not pray for him. I do not know what I did, nor what I do. As for the viceroy's son, I detest him; I do not know him. Do not look at me so sternly; have I offended you? Can you not forgive a poor prisoner,— you who spend your days in the society of some fair and noble lady, free and happy like yourself?"

"I, Countess!" exclaimed Ordener.

Ethel burst into tears; the young man flung himself at her feet.

"Did you not tell me," she continued, smiling through her tears, "that your absence seemed to you short?"

"Who, I, Countess?"

"Do not call me countess," said she gently; "I am no longer a countess to any one, and far less to you."

The young man sprang up, and could not help clasping her to his heart in convulsive delight.

"Oh, my adored Ethel, call me your own Ordener! Tell me,"— and his ardent glances rested on her eyes wet with tears,—"tell me, do you love me still?"

The young girl's answer went unheard, for Ordener, carried away by his emotions, snatched from her lips with her reply that first favor, that sacred kiss, which in the sight of God suffices to make two lovers man and wife.

Both were speechless, because the moment was one of those solemn ones, so rare and so brief in this world, when the soul seems to feel something of celestial bliss. These instants when two souls thus converse in a language understood by no other are not to be described; then all that is human is hushed, and the two immaterial beings become mysteriously united for life in this world and eternity in the next.

Ethel slowly withdrew from Ordener's arms, and by the light of the moon each gazed into the other's face with ecstasy; only, the young man's eye of fire flashed with mas-

culine pride and leonine courage, while the maiden's downcast face was marked by that modesty and angelic shame which in a virgin beauty are always blended with all the joys of love.

"Were you trying to avoid me just now," she said at last, "here in this corridor, my Ordener?"

"Not to avoid you. I was like the unfortunate blind man who is restored to sight after the lapse of long years, and who turns away from the light's first radiance."

"Your comparison is more applicable to me, for during your absence my only pleasure has been the presence of a wretched man, my father. I spent my weary days in trying to comfort him, and," she added, looking down, "in hoping for your coming. I read the fables of the Edda to my father, and when he doubted all men, I read him the Gospel, that at least he might not doubt Heaven; then I talked to him of you, and he was silent, which shows that he loves you. But when I had spent my evenings in vainly watching the arrival of travellers by various roads, and the ships which anchored in the harbor, he shook his head with a bitter smile, and I wept. This prison, where my whole past life has been spent, grew hateful to me; and yet my father, who until you came was all-sufficient for my wants, was still here; but you were not here, and I longed for that liberty which I had never known."

There was a charm which no tongue can express, in the maiden's eyes, in the simplicity of her love, and the sweet hesitation of her confesion. Ordener listened with the dreamy delight of a being who has been removed from the world of reality to enjoy an ideal world.

"And I," said he, "no longer desire that liberty which you do not share!"

"What, Ordener!" quickly exclaimed Ethel, "will you leave us no more?"

These words recalled the young man to all that he had forgotten.

"My Ethel, I must leave you this very night. I will see you again to-morrow, and to-morrow I must leave you again,

to remain until I may return never more to leave you."

"Alas!" mournfully broke in the girl, "must you leave me again?"

"I repeat, my beloved Ethel, that I will come back soon to wrest you from this prison or bury myself in it with you."

"A prisoner with him!" she said softly. "Ah! do not deceive me. Must I only hope for such happiness?"

"What oath do you require? What would you have me do?" cried Ordener; "tell me, Ethel, are you not my wife?" And in a transport of affection he pressed her to his heart.

"I am yours," she whispered.

The two pure and noble hearts throbbed rapturously together, and were but purer and nobler for the embrace.

At this moment a violent burst of laughter was heard close by. A man wrapped in a cloak opened a dark lantern which he had concealed, and the light suddenly revealed Ethel's alarmed, confused face and Ordener's proud but astonished features.

"Courage, my pretty pair! Courage! It strikes me that after so short a walk in the regions of Romance you can scarcely have followed all the windings of the stream of Sentiment, but that you must have taken a short-cut to reach the village of Kisses so quickly."

Our readers have doubtless recognized the lieutenant, who so cordially admired Mademoiselle de Scudéry. Roused from his reading of "Clelia" by the midnight bell, which the two lovers had failed to hear, he started on his nightly rounds.

As he passed the end of the eastern corridor, he caught a few words, and saw what seemed two ghosts moving in the gallery by the light of the moon. Being naturally bold and curious, he hid his lantern under his cloak, and advanced on tiptoe to the two phantoms, so disagreeably awakened from their ecstasy by his sudden burst of laughter.

Ethel made a movement to escape from Ordener; then, returning to his side as if instinctively, and to ask his protection, she hid her burning blushes on her lover's breast.

He raised his head with all the dignity of a king.

"Woe," said he, "woe to him who has frightened and distressed you, Ethel!"

"Yes, indeed," said the lieutenant; "woe befall me if I am so unfortunate as to alarm so sensitive a lady!"

"Sir Lieutenant," haughtily exclaimed Ordener, "I command you to be silent!"

"Sir Insolent," replied the officer, "I command you to be silent!"

"Do you hear me?" returned Ordener in tones of thunder. "Buy pardon by your silence."

"*Tibi tua*," responded the lieutenant; "take your own advice,— buy pardon by your silence!"

"Silence!" cried Ordener in a voice which made the windows shake; and seating the termbling girl in one of the old arm-chairs in the corridor, he grasped the officer rudely by the arm.

"Oh, clown!" said the lieutenant, half laughing, half angry; "don't you see that the doublet which you are so mercilessly crushing is made of the finest Abingdon velvet?"

Ordener looked him full in the face.

"Lieutenant, my patience is not so long as my sword."

"I understand you, my fine fellow," said the lieutenant, with a sardonic smile. "You want me to do you the honor to fight with you. But do you know who I am? No, no, if you please! 'Prince with prince; clown with clown,' as the fair Leander has it."

"If he had added, 'Coward with coward,'" Ordener replied, "I should assuredly never have the distinguished honor of measuring weapons with you."

"I would not hesitate, most worthy shepherd, if you did but wear a uniform."

"I have neither lace nor fringes, Lieutenant; but I wear a sword."

The proud youth, flinging back his cloak, set his cap firmly on his head and grasped his sword-hilt, when Ethel, roused by such imminent danger, seized his arm and clasped his neck, with an exclamation of terror and entreaty.

"You are wise, my pretty mistress, if you do not want your young coxcomb punished for his temerity," said the lieutenant, who at Ordener's threats had put himself upon his guard without any show of emotion; "for Cyrus was about to quarrel with Cambyses,— if it be not too great an honor to compare this rustic with Cambyses."

"For heaven's sake, Lord Ordener," said Ethel, "do not make me the cause and witness of such a misfortune!" Then lifting her lovely eyes to his, she added, "Ordener, I implore you!"

Ordener slowly replaced his half-drawn blade in its scabbard, and the lieutenant exclaimed,—

"By my faith, Sir Knight,— I do not know whether you be a knight, but I give you the title because you seem to deserve it,— let us act according to the laws of valor, if not of gallantry. The lady is right. Engagements like that which I believe you worthy to enter upon with me should not be witnessed by ladies, although — begging this charming damsel's pardon — they may be caused by them. We can therefore only properly discuss the *duellum remotum* here and now, and as the offended party if you will fix the time, place, and weapons, my fine Toledo blade or my Merida dagger shall be at the service of your chopping-knife from the Ashkreuth forges or your hunting-knife tempered in Lake Sparbo."

The "duel adjourned," which the officer suggested was usual in the North, where scholars aver that the custom of duelling originated.

The most valiant gentlemen offered and accepted a *duellum remotum*. It was sometimes deferred for several months, or even years, and during that space of time the foes must not allude by word or deed to the matter which caused the challenge.

Thus in love both rivals forebore to see their sweetheart, so that things might remain unchanged. All confidence was put in the loyalty of a knight upon such a point; as in the ancient tournament, if the judges, deeming the laws of courtesy violated, cast their truncheon into the arena, instantly

every combatant stayed his hand; but until the doubt was cleared up, the throat of the conquered man must remain at the selfsame distance from his victor's sword.

"Very well, Chevalier," replied Ordener, after a brief reflection; "a messenger shall inform you of the place."

"Good!" answered the lieutenant; "so much the better. That will give me time to go to my sister's wedding; for you must know that you are to have the honor of fighting with the future brother-in-law of a great lord, the son of the viceroy of Norway, Baron Ordener Guldenlew, who upon the occasion of this 'auspicious union,' as Artamenes has it, will be made Count Daneskiold, a colonel, and a knight of the Order of the Elephant; and I myself, who am a son of the lord high cancellor of both kingdoms, shall undoubtedly be made a captain."

"Very good, very good, Lieutenant d'Ahlefeld," impatiently exclaimed Ordener, "you are not a captain, yet, nor is the son of the viceroy a colonel; and swords are always swords."

"And clowns always clowns, in spite of every effort to lift them to our own level," muttered the soldier.

"Chevalier," added Ordener, "you know the laws of duelling. You are not to enter this donjon again, and you are not to speak of this affair."

"Trust me to be silent; I shall be as dumb as Mutius Scævola when he held his hand on the burning coals. I will not enter the donjon again, nor permit any Argus of the garrison to do so; for I have just received orders to allow Schumacker to go unguarded in future, which order I was directed to convey to him to-night,— as I should have done had I not spent most of the evening in trying on some new boots from Cracow. The order, between you and me, is a very rash one. Would you like to have me show you my boots?"

During this conversation Ethel, seeing that their anger was appeased, and not knowing the meaning of a *duellum remotum*, had disappeared, first softly whispering in Ordener's ear, "To-morrow."

"I wish, Lieutenant d'Ahlefeld, that you would help me out of the fortress."

"Gladly," said the officer, "although it is somewhat late, or rather very early. But how will you find a boat?"

"That is my affair," said Ordener.

Then, chatting pleasantly, they crossed the garden, the circular courtyard, and the square court, Ordener escorted by the officer of the guard, meeting with no obstacle; they passed through the great gate, the ordnance-room, the parade-ground, and reached the low tower, whose iron doors opened at the lieutenant's order.

"Good-by, Lieutenant d'Ahlefeld," said Ordener

"Good-by," replied the officer. "I declare that you are a brave champion, although I do not know who you are or whether those of your peers whom you may bring to our meeting will be entitled to assume the position of seconds, and ought not rather confine themselves to the modest part of witnesses."

They shook hands, the iron grating was closed, and the lieutenant went back, humming an air by Lully, to enjoy his Polish boots and French novel.

Ordener, left alone upon the threshold, took off his clothes, which he wrapped in his cloak and fastened upon his head with his sword-belt; then, putting into practice Schumacker's principles of independence, he sprang into the still, cold waters of the fjord, and swam through the darkness towards the shore, in the direction of the Spladgest,— a point which he was almost sure to reach dead or alive.

The fatigues of the day had exhausted him, so that it was only with great difficulty that he landed. He dressed himself hastily, and walked towards the Spladgest, which reared its black bulk before him, the moon having been for some time completely veiled.

As he approached the building he heard the sound of voices; a faint light shone from the opening in the roof. Amazed, he knocked loudly at the square door. The noise ceased; the light disappeared. He knocked again. The

light reappeared, and he saw a black figure climb out of the hole in the roof and vanish. Ordener knocked for the third time with the hilt of his sword, and shouted: "Open, in the name of his Majesty the King! Open, in the name of his Serene Highness the Viceroy!"

The door opened slowly, and Ordener found himself face to face with the pale features and tall, thin figure of Spiagudry, who, his clothes in disorder, his eyes fixed, his hair standing erect, his hands covered with blood, held a lamp, whose flame trembled less visibly than his long and lanky figure.

VI

Pirro. Neve
Angelo. What! I believe you would try to play the virtuous man. Wretch! If you utter a single word —
Pirro. But, Angelo, I beseech you, for the love of God —
Angelo. Do not meddle with what you cannot prevent.
Pirro. Ah! When the Devil holds one by a single hair, as well yield him the entire head. Unhappy that I am!

EMILIA GALOTTI.

AN hour after the young traveller with the black plume left the Spladgest, night fell, and the crowd dispersed. Oglypiglap closed the outer door of the funereal structure, while his master, Spiagudry, gave the bodies deposited within a final sprinkling. Then both withdrew to their scantily furnished abode, and while Oglypiglap slept upon his wretched palet, like one of the corpses intrusted to his care, the venerable Spiagudry, seated at a stone table covered with old books, dried plants, and fleshless bones, was buried in grave studies which, although really very harmless, had done no little to give him a reputation among the people, for sorcery and witchcraft,— the disagreeable consequence of science at this period.

He had been absorbed in his meditations for some hours, and, ready at last to exchange his books for his bed, he

paused at this mournful passage from Thormodr Torfesen: "When a man lights his lamp, death is beside him ere it be extinguished."

"With the learned doctor's leave," he muttered, "he shall not be beside me to-night."

And he took up his lamp to blow it out.

"Spiagudry!" cried a voice from the room where the corpses lay.

The old man shook from head to foot. Not that he believed, as another might have done in his place, that the gloomy guests of the Spladgest had risen in revolt against their master. He was enough of a scholar to be proof against such imaginary terrors; and his alarm was genuine, because he knew the voice which called him only too well.

"Spiagudry!" angrily repeated the voice, "must I come and pull off your ears before I can make you hear me?"

"Saint Hospitius have mercy, not on my soul, but on my body!" said the terrified old man; and with a step both hastened and delayed by fear, he moved towards the second side door, which he opened. Our readers have not forgotten that this door led into the mortuary.

His lamp lit up a strange and hideous scene,— on the one hand, the thin, tall, stooping figure of Spiagudry; on the other, a short, stout man, dressed from head to foot in the skins of wild beasts, still stained with dried blood, standing at the feet of Gill Stadt's corpse, which, with the dead bodies of the young girl and the captain, occupied the background. These three mute witnesses, buried in shadow, were the only ones who could behold without flying in horror, the two living beings who now entered into conversation.

The features of the little man, thrown into vivid relief by the light, were singularly wild and fierce. His beard was red and bushy, and his forehead, hidden under an elkskin cap, seemed bristling with hair of the same color; his mouth was large, his lips thick, his teeth white, sharp, and far apart, his nose looked like an eagle's beak; and his grayish-blue eyes, which were extremely quick, flashed a side glance at

Spiagudry, in which the ferocity of a tiger was only tempered by the malice of a monkey. This singular character was armed with a broadsword, an unsheathed dagger, and a stone axe, upon whose long handle he leaned; his hands were covered with thick gloves made of a blue fox-skin.

"That old ghost keeps me waiting a long time," said he, as if talking to himself; and he uttered a sound like the roar of a wild beast.

Spiagudry would certainly have turned pale with fright, had he been capable of turning paler than he was.

"Do you know," continued the little man, addressing him directly, "that I come from Urchtal Sands? Do you want to change your straw bed for one of these beds of stone, that you keep me waiting thus?"

Spiagudry trembled more than ever; the two solitary teeth left to him chattered in his head.

"Excuse me, master," said he, bending his long back to a level with the little man; "I was asleep."

"Do you want me to make you acquainted with a far sounder sleep than that?"

Spiagudry's face assumed an expression of terror, the only thing which could be more comic than his expression of mirth.

"Well! what is it?" continued the little man. "What ails you? Is my presence disagreeable to you?"

"Oh, my lord and master!" replied the old keeper, "there can surely be no greater happiness for me than to see your Excellence."

And the effort which he made to twist his frightened face into a smile would have unbent the brow of any but the dead.

"Tailless old fox, my Excellence commands you to hand over the clothes of Gill Stadt."

As he uttered this name, the little man's fierce, mocking features grew dark and sad.

"Oh, master, pardon me, but I no longer have them!" said Spiagudry. "Your Grace knows that we are obliged to turn over the property of all workers in the mine to the Crown, the king inheriting by right of their being his wards."

The little man turned to the corpse, folded his arms, and said in a hollow voice: "He is right. These miserable miners are like the eider duck;[1] their nests are made for them, but their down is plucked from them."

Then raising the corpse in his arms and hugging it to his heart, he began to utter wild yells of love and grief, like the howls of a bear caressing her young. With these inarticulate sounds were blended, at intervals, a few words in a strange lingo, which Spiagudry did not understand.

He let the corpse drop back upon the stone, and turned towards the guardian.

"Do you know, accursed sorcerer, the name of the ill-fated soldier who was so unlucky as to be preferred by that girl to Gill?"

And he kicked the cold remains of Guth Stersen.

Spiagudry shook his head.

"Well! by the axe of Ingulf, the first of my race, I will exterminate every wearer of that uniform!" and he pointed to the officer's dress. "He on whom I must be avenged will surely be of the number. I will burn down the entire forest to consume the poisonous shrub that it contains. I swore it on the day that Gill died, and I have already given him a companion that will delight his corpse. Oh, Gill! so there you lie, lifeless and powerless,— you who outswam the seal, outran the deer; you who outwrestled the bear in the mountains of Kiölen. There you lie motionless,— you who traversed the province of Throndhjem, from the Orkel to the Lake of Miösen, in a single day; you who climbed the peaks of the Dovrefjeld as the squirrel climbs the oak. There you lie mute and dumb, Gill,— you who on the stormy summits of Kongsberg sang louder than the thunder's roar. Oh, Gill! so it is in vain that for your sake I filled up the Färöe mines; in vain for your sake I burned the Throndhjem cathedral. All my labor is in vain, and I shall never see the race of the children of Iceland, the descendants of Ingulf the Destroyer,

[1] The Norwegian peasants build nests for the eider duck, surprise them while sitting on their young, and strip them of their down.

perpetuated in you; you will never inherit my stone axe; but you leave me the legacy of your skull, from which I may henceforth drink sea-water and the blood of men.

With these words he seized the corpse by the head, exclaiming: "Help me, Spiagudry!"

And pulling off his gloves, he displayed his broad hands, armed with long, hard, crooked nails, like the claws of a wild beast.

Spiagudry, seeing him about to hew off the corpse's head with his sword, cried out with unconcealed horror, "Good heavens! master! A dead man!"

"Well," calmly responded the little man, "would you rather have me sharpen my blade upon a living one?"

"Oh, let me entreat your Grace — How can your Excellency commit such profanation? Your Worship — Sir, your Serenity would not —"

"Are you done? Do I require all these titles, living skeleton, to believe in your deep respect for my sabre?"

"By Saint Waldemar! By Saint Usuph! In the name of Saint Hospitius, spare the dead!"

"Help me, and do not talk of saints to the devil!"

"My lord," continued the suppliant Spiagudry, "by your illustrious ancestor, Saint Ingulf —"

"Ingulf the Destroyer was an outlaw like myself."

"In the name of Heaven," said the old man, falling on his knees, "whose anger I would spare you!"

Impatience overcame the little man. His dull gray eyes flashed like a couple of live coals.

"Help me!" he repeated, flourishing his sword.

These words were uttered in the voice which might beseem a lion, could he speak. The keeper, shuddering and half dead with fright, sat down upon the black stone slab, and held Gill's cold, damp head in his hands, while the little man, by means of sword and dagger, removed the crown with rare skill.

When his task was done, he gazed at the bloody skull for some time, muttering strange words; then he handed it over

to Spiagudry, to be cleaned and prepared, saying with a sort of howl,—

"And I, when I die, shall not have the comfort of thinking that an heir to the soul of Ingulf will drink seawater and the blood of men from out my skull."

After a mournful pause, he added,—

"The hurricane is followed by a hurricane, each avalanche brings down another avalanche, but I shall be the last of my race. Why did not Gill hate every human face even as I do? What demon foe to the demon of Ingulf urged him into those fatal mines in search of a handful of gold?"

Spiagudry, who now returned with Gill's skull, interrupted him: "Your Excellency is right; even gold, as Snorri Sturleson says, may often be bought at too high a price."

"You remind me," said the little man, "of a commission I have for you; here is an iron casket which I found upon yonder officer, all of whose property, as you see, did not fall into your possession; it is so firmly fastened, that it must contain gold,— the only thing precious in the eyes of men. You will give it to widow Stadt, in Thoctree village, to pay her for her son."

He drew a small iron box from his reindeer-skin knapsack. Spiagudry received it with a low bow.

"Obey my orders faithfully," said the little man, with a piercing glance; "remember that nothing can prevent two demons from meeting; I think you are even more of a coward than a miser, and you will answer to me for that box."

"Oh, master, with my soul!"

"Not at all. With your flesh and bones."

At this moment the outer door of the Spladgest echoed with a loud knock. The little man was amazed; Spiagudry tottered, and shaded his lamp with his hand.

"Who is there?" growled the little man. "And you, old villain, how you will shake when you hear the last trump sound, if you shiver so now!"

A second and louder knock was heard.

"It is some dead man in haste to enter," said the little man.

"No, master," muttered Spiagudry, "no corpses are brought here after midnight."

"Living or dead, he drives me hence. You, Spiagudry, be faithful and be dumb. I swear to you, by the spirit of Ingulf and the skull of Gill, that you shall see the dead bodies of the entire regiment of Munkholm pass through your hostelry in review."

And the little man, binding Gill's skull to his belt, and drawing on his gloves, hurried, with the nimbleness of a goat, and by the help of Spiagudry's shoulders, through the opening in the roof, where he vanished.

A third knock shook the whole Spladgest, and a voice outside commanded him to open in the name of the king and viceroy. Then the keeper, moved alike by two different terrors,— one of which might be called the terror of memory, and the other of hope,— hurried toward the low door, and opened it.

VII

In the pursuit of such pleasure as may be found in temporal felicity, she wore herself out, on rough and painful paths, without ever attaining her object.— *Confessions of Saint Augustine.*

RETURNING to his closet after leaving Poël, the governor of Throndhjem ensconced himself in a big easy-chair, and to distract his thoughts directed one of his secretaries to read over the petitions presented to the government.

Bowing low, the secretary began: —

"1. The Rev. Dr. Anglyvius prays that a substitute may be provided for the Rev. Dr. Foxtipp, the head of the Episcopal library, on account of his incompetency: The petitioner does not know who should take the place of the said

incompetent doctor; he would merely state that he, Dr. Anglyvius, has for a long time exercised the functions of librari—"

"Send the rascal to the bishop," interrupted the general.

"2. Athanasius Munder, priest and chaplain to the prisons, asks pardon for twelve penitent convicts on the occasion of the glorious marriage of his Grace, Ordener Guldenlew, Baron Thorwick, Knight of the Dannebrog, son of the viceroy, and the noble lady Ulrica d'Ahlefeld, daughter of his Grace the lord high chancellor of the two kingdoms."

"Lay it on the table," said the general. "I pity convicts."

"3. Faustus-Prudens Destrombidès, Norwegian subject and Latin poet, asks leave to write the epithalamium for the said noble pair."

"Ah, ha! The worthy man must be growing old, for he is the same man who wrote an epithalamium in 1674, for the marriage planned between Schumacker, then Count of Griffenfeld, and Princess Louisa Charlotte of Holstein-Augustenburg,— a marriage which never took place. I fear," muttered the governor, "that Faustus-Prudens is destined to be the poet of broken matches. Lay his petition on the table, and go on. Inquire, on behalf of the said poet, if there be not a vacant bed at the Throndhjem hospital."

"4. The miners of Guldbrandsdal, the Färöe Islands, Sund-Moer, Hubfallo, Roeraas, and Kongsberg, petition to be released from the costs of the royal protectorate."

"These miners are restless. I hear that they are even beginning to grumble at our long delay in answering their petition. Let it be laid aside for mature consideration."

"5. Braal, fisherman, declares, in virtue of the Odelsrecht,[1] that he persists in his intention of buying back his patrimony.

[1] The Odelsrecht was a singular law establishing a species of entail among the Norwegian peasantry. Any man who was compelled to part with his patrimony might prevent the purchaser from transferring it, by declaring every tenth year that he intended to buy it back.

"6. The magistrates of Nœs, Loevig, Indal, Skongen, Stod, Sparbo, and other towns and villages of Northern Throndhjem, pray that a price may be set upon the head of the assassin, thief, and incendiary, Hans, said to be a native of Klipstadur, in Iceland. Nychol Orugix, executioner for the province of Throndhjem, who claims that Hans is his property, opposes the petition. Benignus Spiagudry, keeper of the Spladgest, to whom the corpse should belong, supports the petition."

"That robber is a very dangerous fellow," said the general, "particularly now that we are threatened with trouble among the miners. Issue a proclamation offering a thousand crowns reward for his head."

"7. Benignus Spiagudry, doctor, antiquary, sculptor, mineralogist, naturalist, botanist, lawyer, chemist, mechanic, physicist, astronomer, theologian, grammarian —"

"Why," broke in the general, "is not this the same Spiagudry who keeps the Spladgest?"

"Yes, to be sure, your Excellency," replied the secretary,—"keeper, for his Majesty, of the institution of the Spladgest, in the royal city of Throndhjem, sets forth that he, Benignus Spiagudry, discovered that the stars called fixed are not lighted by the star called the sun; *item*, that the real name of Odin is Frigg, son of Fridulf; *item*, that the marine lobworm feeds on sand; *item*, that the noise of the inhabitants drives the fish away from the coast of Norway, so that the means of subsistence are growing less in proportion to the increase of the population; *item*, that the fjord known as Otte-Sund was formerly known as Limfjord, and only took the name of Otte-Sund after Otho the Red cast his spear into it; *item*, he sets forth that it was by his advice and under his direction that an old statue of Freya was changed into the statue of Justice, which now adorns the market-place in Throndhjem, and that the lion found at the feet of the idol has been turned into a devil, symbolizing crime; *item* —"

"Oh, spare me the rest of his eminent services! Let me see,— what does he want?"

The secretary turned over several pages, and went on:

"Your most humble petitioner feels that he may justly petition your Excellency, in return for so many useful labors in the domain of science and literature, to increase the reward to ten escalins for every corpse, male or female, which cannot but be gratifying to the dead, as proving the value set upon their bodies."

Here the door opened, and the usher in a loud voice announced, "The noble lady, Countess d'Ahlefeld."

At the same time a tall woman, wearing the small coronet of a countess, richly dressed in scarlet satin trimmed with gold fringe and ermine, entered, and accepting the hand which the general offered her, seated herself beside him.

The countess was perhaps fifty years old. Age had added little to the furrows with which pride and ambition had long since marked her face. She looked at the old governor haughtily, and with an artificial smile.

"Well, General, your ward delays. He should have been here before sunset."

"He would have been here, my lady Countess, if he had not gone to Munkholm upon his arrival."

"To Munkholm! I hope it was not to see Schumacker?"

"That may be."

"Could Baron Thorwick's first visit be to Schumacker!"

"Why not, Countess? Schumacker is unfortunate and unhappy."

"What, General! Is the viceroy's son on familiar terms with a prisoner of state?"

"When Frederic Guldenlew confided his son to my care, he begged me, noble lady, to bring him up as if he were my own. I thought that an acquaintance with Schumacker might be useful to Ordener, who is destined some day to wield such power; consequently, with the viceroy's permission, I obtained from my brother, Grummond de Knud, a

permit to enter all the prisons, which I gave to Ordener. He often uses it."

"And how long, noble General, has Baron Ordener had the pleasure of this useful acquaintance?"

"Rather more than a year, Countess. It seems that Schumacker's society pleased him, for it kept him at Throndhjem for a long time; and it was only reluctantly, and by my express request, that he left the city last year to visit Norway."

"And does Schumacker know that his comforter is the son of one of his greatest enemies?"

"He knows that he is a friend, and that is enough for him, as for us."

"But you, General," said the countess, with a searching look, "when you tolerated — nay, encouraged — this connection, did you know that Schumacker had a daughter?"

"I knew it, noble Countess."

"And this fact seemed to you of no importance to your pupil?"

"The pupil of Levin de Knud, the son of Frederic Guldenlew, is an honest man. Ordener knows the barrier which separates him from Schumacker's daughter; he is incapable of winning the affection, unless his purpose was upright, of any girl, above all the daughter of an unfortunate man."

The noble Countess d'Ahlefeld blushed and paled. She turned away her head to avoid the calm gaze of the old man, as if it were that of an accuser.

"But," she stammered, "this connection strikes me, General,— let me speak my mind,— as strange and imprudent. It is said that the miners and tribes of the North are threatening to revolt, and that the name of Schumacker is mixed up with the affair."

"Noble lady, you surprise me!" exclaimed the governor. "Schumacker has hitherto borne his misfortunes calmly. The report is doubtless ill-founded."

At this moment the door opened, and the usher announced

that a messenger from his Grace the lord high chancellor wished to speak with the noble countess.

The lady rose hurriedly, took leave of the governor, and while he continued his inspection of the petitions she hastened to her apartments in a wing of the palace, directing that the messenger should follow her.

She had been seated on a rich sofa in the midst of her women for a few instants only, when the messenger entered. The countess on seeing him made a slight gesture of aversion, which she hid at once by a friendly smile.

And yet the messenger's appearance was not at all repulsive. He was a man of somewhat diminutive stature, whose plumpness suggested anything else rather than a messenger. Still, a close study of his face showed it to be frank to the point of impudence, and his look of good-humor had a spice of deviltry and malice. He bowed low to the countess, and offered her a package sealed with silk thread.

"Noble lady," said he, "deign to permit me to venture to lay at your feet a precious message from his Grace your illustrious husband, my revered master."

"Is he not coming himself? And why did he choose you as his messenger?" inquired the countess.

"Important business delays the coming of his Grace, as this letter will inform you, Madam. For myself, I am by the orders of my noble master to enjoy the distinguished honor of a private interview with you."

The countess turned pale, and exclaimed in a trembling voice, "With me,— me, Musdœmon?"

"If it distresses the noble lady in the slightest degree, her unworthy servant will be reduced to despair."

"Distress me! No, of course not," returned the countess, trying to smile. "But is this conversation so essential?"

The messenger bowed down to the ground.

"Absolutely essential. The letter which the illustrious countess has deigned to receive from my hands probably contains a formal order to that effect."

It was strange to see the proud Countess d'Ahlefeld trem-

ble and turn pale before a servant who paid her such profound respect. She slowly opened the package and read its contents. After a second reading she turned to her women, and said in a faint voice: "Go; leave us alone."

"I hope the noble lady," said the messenger, bending his knee, "will deign to pardon the liberty which I venture to take and the trouble which I seem to cause her."

"On the contrary," replied the countess, with a forced smile, "I assure you that I am very happy to see you."

The women withdrew.

"Elphega, have you forgotten that there was a time when you were not averse to being alone with me?"

It was the messenger who addressed the noble countess, and the words were accompanied by a laugh like that uttered by the Devil, at the instant that his compact expires and he seizes the soul which sold itself to him.

The great lady bowed her humbled head.

"Would that I had indeed forgotten it!" she murmured.

"Poor fool! Why should you blush for things which no human eye ever saw?"

"God sees what men do not see."

"God, weak woman! You are not worthy to deceive your husband, for he is less credulous than you."

"Your insults to my remorse are scarcely generous, Musdœmon."

"Well, if you feel remorse, Elphega, why insult it yourself by daily committing fresh crimes?"

The Countess d'Ahlefeld hid her face in her hands; the messenger continued: "Elphega, you must choose: remorse and more crimes, or crime and no more remorse. Do as I do: choose the second course; it is better — at least it is more cheerful."

"Heaven grant," said the countess, in low tones, "that those words may not be counted against you in eternity."

"Come, my dear, a truce to jest."

Then Musdœmon, seating himself behind the countess, and putting his arm about her neck, added: "Elphega, try to

be, at least in imagination, what you were twenty years ago."

The unfortunate countess, the slave of her accomplice, strove to respond to his loathsome caresses. There was something too revolting, even for these degraded souls, in this adulterous embrace of two beings who scorned and despised each other. The illegal caresses which had once delighted them, and which some horrible and unknown expediency compelled them still to lavish upon each other, now tortured them. Strange but just change of guilty affections! Their crime had become their punishment.

The countess, to cut short this guilty torment, at last asked her odious lover, tearing herself from his arms, with what verbal message her husband had charged him.

"D'Ahlefeld," said Musdœmon, "just as he was about to see his power confirmed by the marriage of Ordener Guldenlew to our daughter —"

"Our daughter!" exclaimed the haughty countess; and she fixed her eye on Musdœmon with a look of pride and contempt.

"Well," coldly continued the messenger, "I think that Ulrica is at least as much mine as his. I was saying that the match would not be wholly satisfactory to your husband unless Schumacker could at the same time be destroyed. In his remote prison the old favorite is yet almost as much to be dreaded as in his palace. He has obscure but powerful friends at court,— powerful because they are obscure; and the king, learning a month since that the chancellor's negotiations with the Duke of Holstein-Ploen were at a standstill, cried out impatiently: 'Griffenfeld knew more than all of them put together.' A schemer named Dispolsen, come from Munkholm to Copenhagen, had several secret interviews with him, after which the king sent to the chancellor's office for Schumacker's patents of nobility and title-deeds. No one knows the object of Schumacker's ambition; but if he desire nothing but his liberty, for a prisoner of state that is the same as to desire power! He must therefore die, and must die by authority of justice; we are now

striving to invent a crime for him. Your husband, Elphega, on the plea of inspecting the northern provinces incognito, will assure himself of the result of our underhand dealings among the miners, whom we hope to incite to rebel, in Schumacker's name, which revolt we can easily put down later. What troubles us is the loss of certain important papers relating to this plot, and which we have every reason to believe have fallen into the hands of Dispolsen. Knowing that he had set out to return to Munkholm, carrying to Schumacker his parchments, his diplomas, and possibly these documents which might ruin, or at least compromise us, we posted certain faithful men in the gorges of Kiölen, directing them to rid us of him, after robbing him of his papers. But if, as we are assured, Dispolsen left Bergen by water, our efforts in that quarter are in vain. However, as I came along I gathered vague reports of the murder of a captain by the name of Dispolsen. We shall see. Meantime we are searching for a famous bandit, Hans, called Hans of Iceland, whom we wish to put at the head of the revolt in the mines. And you, my dear,— what news have you for me here? Has the pretty bird at Munkholm been caught in her cage? Has the old minister's daughter finally fallen a prey to our *falco fulvus*, our son Frederic? "

The countess, recovering her pride, again exclaimed: " Our son! "

" I' faith, how old may he be? Twenty-four. We have known each other some twenty-six years, Elphega."

" God knows," cried the countess, " my Frederic is the chancellor's lawful heir."

" If God knows it," laughingly replied the messenger, " the Devil does not. Moreover, your Frederic is but a presumptuous youngster, quite unworthy of me, and it is not worth our while to quarrel for such a trifle. He is only fit to make love to a girl. Has he at least succeeded? "

" Not yet, so far as I know."

" Oh, Elphega, do try to play a less passive part in our affairs. The count and myself, as you see, are tolerably

active. I return to your husband to-morrow. For mercy's sake, do not confine yourself to praying for our sins, like the Madonna whom the Italians invoke when about to commit a murder! D'Ahlefeld, too, must see to rewarding me a little more munificently than he has hitherto done. My fortune is closely connected with yours; but I am tired of being the husband's servant when I am the wife's lover, and of being only the tutor, the teacher, the pedagogue, when I am almost the father."

At this instant midnight struck, and one of the women entered, reminding the countess that by the palace regulations all lights must be put out at that hour.

The countess, glad to end a painful interview, recalled her attendants.

"Permit me, gracious Countess," said Musdœmon, as he withdrew, "to retain a hope of seeing you to-morrow, and to lay at your feet my homage and sincere respect."

VIII

It cannot be but thou hast murdered him;
So should a murderer look; so dead, so grim!
SHAKESPEARE: *Midsummer Night's Dream.*

"UPON my honor, old man," said Ordener to Spiagudry, "I began to think that the corpses who lodge in this building would have to open the door."

"Excuse me, sir," replied the keeper, in whose ears the names of king and viceroy still rang, as he repeated his trite excuse, "I was — I was sound asleep."

"Then I suppose your dead men do not sleep, and it was probably they whom I heard talking just now."

Spiagudry was confused.

"You — stranger,— you — heard?"

"Oh, yes! but what does it matter? I did not come here

to meddle with your affairs, but to interest you in mine. Let us go inside."

Spiagudry was by no means anxious to allow the newcomer to see Gill's body, but these last words comforted him considerably; and besides, how could he prevent his entrance?

He accordingly allowed the young man to pass, and closing the door, said: "Benignus Spiagudry is at your service in all that relates to human science; yet if, as your unseasonable visit seems to show, you suppose that you are dealing with a sorcerer, you are wrong; *ne famam credas;* I am only a learned man. Enter my laboratory, stranger."

"Not at all," said Ordener; "my errand is with these corpses."

"These corpses!" said Spiagudry, beginning to tremble again. "But, sir, you cannot see them."

"What! I cannot see bodies which are placed here for the sole purpose of being seen! I repeat, that I wish to question you concerning one of them; it is your duty to answer. Obey cheerfully, old man, or you will be forced to obey."

Spiagudry had a sincere respect for swords, and he saw the flash of steel at Ordener's side.

"*Nihil non arrogat armis,*" he muttered; and fumbling with his bunch of keys, he opened the grating, and admitted the stranger into the second section of the hall.

"Show me the captain's clothes," said the latter.

At this instant a ray from the lamp fell upon Gill Stadt's bloody head.

"Good God!" exclaimed Ordener, "what abominable sacrilege!"

"Great Saint Hospitius, pity me!" sighed the poor keeper.

"Old man," continued Ordener, in threatening tones, "are you so remote from the tomb that you can safely violate the respect which is its due? And do you not fear, wretched fellow, that the living will teach you what you owe to the dead?"

"Oh," cried the poor keeper, "mercy! It was not I! If you only knew —" And he stopped; for he remembered the little man's words: "Be faithful, be dumb." "Did you see any one escape through that aperture?" he asked faintly.

"Yes; was it your accomplice?"

"No; it was the guilty man, the only guilty man! I swear it by all the torments of hell, by all the blessings of heaven, by this same body so infamously profaned!" and he fell upon the pavement before Ordener.

Hideous as Spiagudry was, there was yet an accent of truth in his despair and protestations, which convinced the young man.

"Old man," said he, "rise; and if you did not outrage death, do not degrade age."

The keeper rose. Ordener continued: "Who is the culprit?"

"Oh, silence, noble youth! You know not of whom you speak. Silence!"

And Spiagudry mentally repeated: "Be faithful, be dumb."

Ordener answered coldly: "Who is the culprit? I must know!"

"In Heaven's name, sir, do not say so! Be silent, for fear —"

"Fear will not silence me, but shall make you speak."

"Excuse me; forgive me, young master!" said the agonized Spiagudry. "I cannot."

"You can, for I insist. Tell me the profaner's name!"

Spiagudry still strove to evade.

"Well, noble master, the profaner of this corpse is the assassin of that officer."

"Then that officer was murdered?" asked Ordener, reminded, by this abrupt transition, of the object of his search.

"Yes, undoubtedly, sir."

"And by whom,— by whom?"

"In the name of the saint on whom your mother called

when she gave you birth, do not seek to know his name, young master; do not force me to reveal it."

"If my desire to know it required any spur, you would add it, old man, in the shape of curiosity. I command you to name the murderer."

"Well, then," said Spiagudry, "see these deep wounds, made by long, sharp nails on the body of this unfortunate man. They will name the assassin."

And the old man showed Ordener a number of ugly scratches on the naked, freshly washed corpse.

"What!" said Ordener, "was it some wild beast?"

"No, my young lord."

"But unless it was the Devil —"

"Hush! Beware, lest your guesses come too close to the mark. Did you never hear," added the keeper in a low voice, "of a man or a monster with human face, whose nails are as long as those of Ashtaroth who ruined us all, or of Antichrist who will yet destroy us?"

"Speak more plainly."

"'Woe unto you!' says the Apocalypse —"

"I demand the assassin's name!"

"The assassin — his name? My lord, have pity on me; have pity on yourself!"

"The second of those prayers would destroy the first, even if serious reasons did not compel me to tear that name from your lips. Abuse my patience no longer."

"So be it, if you insist, young man," said Spiagudry, raising himself, and in a loud voice. "The murderer, the profaner, is Hans of Iceland."

This terrible name was not unknown to Ordener.

"What!" he cried, "Hans! that execrable bandit!"

"Do not call him a bandit, for he has no followers."

"Then, wretch, how do you know him? What common crimes have brought you together?"

"Oh, noble master, do not stoop to believe in appearances. Is the oak-tree poisonous because the serpent finds shelter within its trunk?"

"No idle words! A scoundrel has no friend who is not an accomplice."

"I am not his friend, and still less his accomplice, and if all my oaths fail to convince you, sir, let me implore you to observe that this monstrous sacrilege exposes me, twenty-four hours hence, when Gill Stadt's body is to be removed, to the torture allotted to those guilty of profanation, and thus cast me into the most fearful state of anxiety ever endured by innocent man."

These considerations of personal interest moved Ordener more than the suppliant voice of the poor keeper, much of whose pathetic though useless resistance to the little man's sacrilegious act they had doubtless inspired. Ordener reflected a moment, while Spiagudry tried to read in his face whether this pause meant peace or boded a storm.

At last he said, in a severe though quiet tone: "Old man, speak the truth! Did you find any papers upon that officer?"

"None, upon my honor."

"Do you know if Hans of Iceland found any?"

"I swear by Saint Hospitius that I do not know."

"You do not know? Do not know where this Hans of Iceland hides?"

"He never hides; he roams about perpetually."

"Perhaps; but where is his den?"

"That pagan," whispered the old man, "has as many dens as the island of Hitteren has reefs, or the dog-star rays."

"I order you again," broke in Ordener, "to speak in plain terms. Let me set you an example; hearken. You are mysteriously allied with a brigand, whose accomplice you still declare that you are not. If you know him, you must know where he has gone. Do not interrupt me. If you are not his accomplice, you will not hesitate to lead me in search of him!"

Spiagudry could not contain his fright.

"*You*, noble lord! *you*,— great God! full of youth and

life,— *you* would provoke, seek out that demon! When four-armed Ingiald fought the giant Nyctolm, at least, he had four arms!"

"Well," said Ordener, with a smile, "if four arms are a requisite, will you not be my guide?"

"I! your guide! How can you jest with an old man who almost needs a guide himself?"

"Listen," replied Ordener; "do not try to jest with me. If this profanation, of which I would fain believe you innocent, exposes you to be punished for sacrilege, you cannot stay here. You must fly. I offer you my protection, but on condition that you lead me to the brigand's lair. Be my guide, I will be your saviour. Nay, more: if I catch Hans of Iceland, I shall bring him here, dead or alive. You can then prove your innocence, and I promise to restore your office. Stay; meantime, here are more coins than your place brings you in a year."

Ordener, by keeping his purse until the last, had observed that gradation in his arguments required by the wholesome laws of logic. They were strong enough in themselves to make Spiagudry consider. He began by taking the money.

"Noble master, you are right," said he; and his eye, hitherto vague and uncertain, was fixed upon Ordener. "If I follow you, I incur the future vengeance of the terrible Hans. If I stay, I fall to-morrow into the hands of Orugix the hangman.

"What is the penalty of sacrilege? Never mind. In either case, my poor life is in danger; but as, according to the wise remark of Saemond-Sigfusson, otherwise called the Sage, *inter duo pericula æqualia minus imminens eligendum est*, I will follow you. Yes, sir, I will be your guide. Pray do not forget, however, that I have done all I could to dissuade you from your daring scheme."

"Very good," said Ordener. "Then you will be my guide. Old man" he added, with a meaning glance, "I count upon your fidelity."

"Oh, master!" replied the keeper, "Spiagudry's faith is as pure as the gold which you so graciously gave me."

"Let it remain so, or I will show you that the steel which I bear about me is as sterling as my gold. Where do you think Hans of Iceland is?"

"Why, as the southern part of the province of Throndhjem is full of troops sent thither on some errand of the lord chancellor, Hans must have gone in the direction of Walderhog cave, or toward Lake Miösen. Our road lies through Skongen."

"When can you start?"

"At the close of the day now dawning, when night falls and the Spladgest is closed, your poor servant will begin his duties as your guide, for which he must deprive the dead of his care. We will try to hide the mutilation of the miner from the eyes of the people for this one day."

"Where shall I meet you to-night?"

"In the market-place, if it please my master, near the statue of Justice, which was formerly Freya, and which will doubtless protect me with her shadow, in gratitude for the fine devil which I had carved at her feet."

Spiagudry would probably have repeated the terms of his petition to the governor, had not Ordener interrupted him.

"Enough, old man; it is a bargain."

"A bargain," repeated the keeper.

He had scarcely uttered these words, when a low growl was heard above their heads. The keeper shuddered.

"What is that?" he said.

"Is there not," asked Ordener, equally surprised, "any other living being dwelling here besides yourself?"

"You remind me of my assistant, Oglypiglap," replied Spiagudry, reassured by the thought. "It was probably his snores which we heard. A sleeping Lapp, Bishop Arngrimsson says, makes as much noise as a waking woman."

As they talked, they approached the door of the Spladgest. Spiagudry opened it softly.

"Good-by, young sir," he said to Ordener; "may Heaven

keep you merry. Good-by until to-night. If your road lead you by the cross of Saint Hospitius, deign to utter a prayer for your wretched servant, Benignus Spiagudry."

Then hastily closing the door, as much through fear of being seen as to guard his lamp from the early morning breezes, he returned to Gill's corpse, and did his best so to arrange it that the wound might not be perceived.

Many reasons combined to persuade the timid keeper to accept the stranger's perilous offer. The motives for his bold resolve may be ranked as follows: (1) fear of Ordener here and now; (2) dread of Orugix the hangman; (3) an ancient grudge against Hans of Iceland,— a grudge which he scarcely dared acknowledge even to himself, so strong was the power of fear; (4) a love of science, which would benefit largely by his journey; (5) confidence in his own cunning, which would enable him to evade Hans; (6) a wholly speculative attraction for certain metal contained in the young adventurer's purse, and probably also in the iron casket stolen from the captain and intended for Widow Stadt, a message which now ran a great risk of never leaving the messenger's hands.

Still another and a final reason was the well or ill founded hope of returning sooner or later to the post which he was about to desert. Besides, what did it matter to him whether the robber killed the traveller, or the traveller the robber? At this point in his mediations he could not help saying aloud: "It will be one more corpse for me, anyhow."

Another growl was heard, and the unhappy keeper shivered.

"Indeed, that is not Oglypiglap's snore," said he; "that noise comes from without."

Then, after a moment's thought, he added: "How silly I am to be so frightened! The dog on the wharf probably waked and barked."

Then he finished his arrangement of Gill's disfigured remains, and closing all the doors, threw himself upon his mattress to sleep off the fatigue of the past night and gain strength for the coming one.

IX

Juliet. Oh, think'st thou we shall ever meet again?
Romeo. I doubt it not; and all these woes shall serve
For sweet discourses in our time to come.
SHAKESPEARE: *Romeo and Juliet.*

THE signal-light at Munkholm castle had just been extinguished, and in its place the sailor entering Throndhjem fjord saw the helmet of the soldier on guard gleam from afar in the beams of the rising sun like a planet moving in its orbit, when Schumacker, leaning on his daughter's arm, came down as usual into the garden which surrounded his prison. Both had spent a restless night,— the old man unable to sleep, the maiden kept awake by happy thoughts. They walked in silence for a time; then the aged prisoner said, fixing a sad and serious gaze upon the lovely girl:—

"You blush and smile at your own thoughts, Ethel; you are happy, for you have no cause to blush for the past, and you smile at the future."

Ethel blushed still deeper, and her smile faded.

"My lord and father," she stammered in confusion, "I brought the volume containing the Edda."

"Very well; read, my daughter," said Schumacker; and he resumed his meditations.

Then the melancholy captive, seated on a black rock shaded by a dark fir, listened to his daughter's sweet voice without heeding the words which she read, as a thirsty traveller delights in the murmur of the stream that quenches his fever.

Ethel read him the story of the shepherdess Allanga, who refused a king until he proved himself a warrior. Prince Ragnar-Lodbrok could not win the maid until he returned triumphant over the robber of Klipstadur, Ingulf the Destroyer.

Suddenly a sound of footsteps and the rustling of the foliage interrupted the reading and roused Schumacker from

his revery. Lieutenant d'Ahlefeld appeared from behind the rock upon which they sat. Ethel's head drooped as she recognized their tormentor, and the officer exclaimed:—

"I' faith, fair lady, your lovely lips just uttered the name of Ingulf the Destroyer. I heard you, and I presume that you were talking of his grandson, Hans of Iceland, and that reminded you of him. Ladies love to talk of robbers. By the way, there are tales of Ingulf and his descendants which are both fearful and interesting. Ingulf the Destroyer had but one son, born of the witch Thoarka; that son also had but one son, whose mother was likewise a witch. For four centuries the race has been perpetuated thus for the desolation of Iceland, there being always a single scion, who never produces more than one offshoot. By this series of solitary heirs the infernal spirit of Ingulf has been handed down to the present day, and flourishes in the famous Hans of Iceland, who was doubtless so happy as to occupy your virgin thoughts just now."

The officer paused for an instant. Ethel was silent from embarrassment, Schumacker from vexation. Delighted to find them willing, if not to answer, at least to listen, he added, —"The Klipstadur outlaw's one passion is a hatred of the human race, his one thought to harm them."

"He is wise," abruptly remarked the old man.

"He always lives alone," resumed the lieutenant.

"He is fortunate," said Schumacker.

The lieutenant was charmed by this double interruption, which seemed to seal a compact for conversation.

"May the god Mithra preserve us," he cried, "from such wise men and such fortunate men! Accursed be the evil-minded zephyr which brought the last demon of Iceland to Norway. I was wrong to say evil-minded, for they say it was a bishop to whom we owe the pleasure of possessing Hans of Klipstadur. If we may believe the story, certain Iceland peasants, having captured little Hans among the Bessestad mountains in his infancy, were about to kill him, as Astyages slew the Bactrian lion's whelp; but the bishop of Scalholt

interfered, and took the cub under his own protection, hoping to make a Christian of the devil. The good bishop tried in a thousand ways to develop his infernal intellect, forgetting that the hemlock cannot be changed into a lily even in the hot-houses of Babylon. So when the young devil grew up, he repaid all this care by escaping one fine night upon the trunk of a tree, across the seas, lighting his flight by setting the bishop's house on fire. That's the old women's account of the way this Icelander came to Norway, and now, thanks to his education, he affords us a perfect type of the monster. Since then the destruction of the Färöe mines, the death of three hundred men crushed beneath the ruins, the overthrow of the hanging rock at Golyn at midnight upon the village below, the fall of Half-Broer bridge from the rocks upon the high-road, the burning of Throndhjem cathedral, the extinction of beacon-lights upon the coast on stormy nights, and countless crimes and murders hidden in Lakes Sparbo or Miösen, or concealed in the caves of Walderhog and Rylass, and in the gorges of the Dovrefjeld, bear witness to the presence of this Ahriman [1] incarnate in the province of Throndhjem. The old women declare that a new hair grows in his beard with every fresh crime; in that case his beard must be as luxuriant as that of the most venerable Assyrian magi. Yet you must have heard, fair lady, how often the governor has tried to stop the extraordinary growth of that beard."

Schumacker again broke the silence.

"And has every effort to capture this fellow," he asked with a look of triumph and an ironical smile, "been unsuccessful? I congratulate the chancellor."

The officer did not understand the ex-chancellor's sarcasm.

"Hans has hitherto proved as invincible as Horatius Cocles. Old soldiers, young militiamen, country boors, mountaineers, all fly or die before him. He is a demon who can neither be avoided nor caught; the best luck that can

[1] The Persian god of evil.

befall those who go in search of him is not to find him. You may be surprised, gracious lady," he went on, seating himself familiarly beside Ethel, who drew nearer to her father, " at all my curious anecdotes concerning this supernatural being. It was not without a purpose that I collected these strange traditions. It seems to me — and I shall be pleased if you, fair lady, share my opinion — that the adventures of Hans would make a delicious romance, after the style of Mademoiselle de Scudéry's sublime stories, ' Artamenes,' or ' Clelia,' only six volumes of which latter I have yet read, but it is none the less a masterpiece in my eyes. Of course we should have to soften our climate, dress up our traditions, and modify our barbarous names. For instance, Throndhjem, which I should call ' Durtinianum,' should see its forests converted, by a touch of my magic wand, into delightful groves watered by a thousand streamlets far more poetic than our hideous torrents. Our dark, deep caves should give place to charming grottoes carpeted with gilded pebbles and azure shells. In one of these grottos should live a famous magician, Hannus of Thule. For you must own that the name Hans of Iceland is by no means agreeable. This giant,— you must feel that it would be absurd not to make the hero of such a work a giant,— this giant should descend in a direct line from the god Mars (Ingulf the Destroyer affords no food for imagination) and the enchantress Theona,— don't you think I have made a happy change in the name Thoarka? — daughter of the Cumean sibyl. Hannus, after being educated by the great Magian of Thule, should finally escape from the pontiff's palace in a car drawn by two dragons,— it would be very narrow-minded to cling to the shabby old legend of the trunk of a tree. Reaching the land of Durtinianum, and ravished by that enchanting region, he should choose it as the place of his abode and the scene of his crimes. It would be no easy matter to draw an agreeable picture of the robberies of Hans. However, we might soften their horror by an ingeniously planned love-affair. The shepherdess Alcyppe, walking one day with her lamb in a grove of myr-

tles and olives, should be noticed by the giant, who should suddenly yield to the magic of her eyes. But Alcyppe should love the handsome Lycidas, an officer of the militia, garrisoned in her village. The giant should be annoyed by the centurion's happiness, and the centurion by the giant's attentions. You can fancy, dear lady, how charming such imaginative powers might make the adventures of Hannus. I will wager my Polish boots against a pair of slippers that such a subject, treated by Mademoiselle de Scudéry, would set all the women in Copenhagen wild with delight."

The last words roused Schumacker from the melancholy thoughts in which he had been buried during the lieutenant's fruitless display of brains.

"Copenhagen!" he exclaimed. "What news is there from Copenhagen, sir officer?"

"None, i' faith, that I know of," replied the lieutenant, "save that the king has given his consent to the great marriage which is just now occupying the thoughts of both kingdoms."

"What!" rejoined Schumacker; "what marriage?"

The appearance of a fourth speaker arrested the words on the lieutenant's lips

All three looked up. The prisoner's moody features brightened, the lieutenant's frivolous face grew grave, and Ethel's sweet countenance, which had been pale and confused during the officer's long soliloquy, again beamed with life and joy. She sighed heavily, as if her heart were eased of an intolerable weight, and her sad smile rested upon the new-comer. It was Ordener.

The old man, the girl, and the officer were placed in a singular position toward Ordener; they had each a secret in common with him, therefore each felt embarrassed by the presence of the other. Ordener's return to the donjon was no surprise to Schumacker or Ethel, who were expecting him; but it amazed the lieutenant as much as the sight of the lieutenant astonished Ordener, who might have feared some indiscretion on the part of the officer in regard to the scene of

the previous night, if the silence ordained by the etiquette of duelling had not reassured him. He could therefore only be surprised at seeing him quietly seated between his two prisoners.

These four persons could say nothing while together, for the very reason that they would have had much to say had they been alone. Therefore, aside from glances of intelligence and embarrassment, Ordener met with an absolutely silent reception.

The lieutenant burst out laughing.

"By the train of the royal mantle, my dear new-comer, here's a silence by no means unlike that of the senators of Gaul when Brennus the Roman — Upon my honor, I have forgotten which were the Romans and which the Gauls,— the senators or the general. Never mind. Since you are here, help me to enlighten this worthy old gentleman as to the news. I was just about to tell him, when you made your sudden entry on the stage, about the famous marriage which is now absorbing both Medes and Persians."

"What marriage?" asked Ordener and Schumacker with a single voice.

"By the cut of your clothes, sir stranger," cried the lieutenant, clapping his hands, "I guessed that you came from some other world. Your present question turns my doubt to certainty. You must have landed only yesterday on the banks of the Nidder in a fairy-car drawn by two winged dragons; for you could not have travelled through Norwway without hearing of the wonderful marriage of the viceroy's son and the lord chancellor's daughter."

Schumacker turned to the lieutenant.

"What! Is Ordener Guldenlew to marry Ulrica d'Ahlefeld?"

"As you say," replied the officer; "and it will all be settled before the fashion of French farthingales reaches Copenhagen."

"Frederic's son must be about twenty-two years old, for I had been in Copenhagen fortress a year when the news

of his birth reached me. Let him marry young," added Schumacker with a bitter smile. "When disgrace comes upon him, at least no one can accuse him of having aspired to a cardinal's hat."

The old favorite alluded to one of his own misfortunes, of which the lieutenant knew nothing.

"No, indeed," said he, laughing heartily. "Baron Ordener will receive the title of count, the collar of the Order of the Elephant, and a colonel's epaulettes, which would scarcely match with the cardinal's hat."

"So much the better," answered Schumacker. Then after a pause he added, shaking his head as if he saw his revenge before him, "Some day they may make an iron collar of his fine order; they may break his count's coronet over his head; they may strike him in the face with his colonel's epaulettes."

Ordener seized the old man's hand.

"For the sake of your hatred, sir, do not curse an enemy's good fortune before you know whether it be good fortune in his eyes."

"Pooh!" said the lieutenant, "What are the old fellow's railings to Baron Thorwick?"

"Lieutenant," cried Ordener, "they may be more to him than you think. And," he added, after a brief silence, your grand marriage is not so certain as you suppose."

"*Fiat quod vis*," rejoined the lieutenant, with an ironical bow; "the king, the viceroy, and the chancellor have, it is true, made every arrangement for the wedding; but if it displeases you, Sir Stranger, what matter the lord chancellor, the viceroy, and the king!"

"You may be right," said Ordener, seriously.

"Oh, by my faith!"—and the lieutenant threw himself back in a fit of laughter "this is too good! How I wish Baron Thorwick could hear a fortune-teller so well instructed in regard to the things of this world decide his fate. Believe me, my learned prophet, your beard is not long enough for a good sorcerer."

"Sir Lieutenant," coldly answered Ordener, "I do not think that Ordener Guldenlew will ever marry a woman whom he does not love."

"Ha, ha! here we have the Book of Proverbs. And who tells you, Sir Greenmantle, that the baron does not love Ulrica d'Ahlefeld?"

"And, if it please you, in your turn, who tells you that he does?"

Here the lieutenant, as often happens, was led by the heat of the conversation into stating a fact of which he was by no means certain.

"Who tells me that he loves her? The question is absurd. I am sorry for your powers of divination; but everybody knows that this match is no less a marriage of inclination than of convenience."

"At least, everybody but me," said Ordener, gravely.

"Except you? So be it. But what difference does that make? You cannot prevent the viceroy's son from being in love with the chancellor's daughter."

"In love?"

"Madly in love!"

"He must indeed be mad to be in love with her."

"Hullo! don't forget of whom and to whom you speak. Would not one say that the son of the viceroy could not take a fancy to a lady without consulting this clown?"

As he spoke, the officer rose. Ethel, who saw Ordener's face flush, hurried toward him.

"Oh!" said she, "pray be calm; do not heed these insults. What does it matter to us whether the viceroy's son loves the chancellor's daughter or not?"

The gentle hand laid on the young man's heart stilled the tempest raging within. He cast an enraptured glance at his Ethel, and did not hear the lieutenant, who, recovering his good-humor, exclaimed: "The lady acts with infinite grace the part of the Sabine woman interceding between her father and her husband. My words were rather heedless; I forgot," he added, turning to Ordener, "that there is a bond

of brotherhood between us, and that we can no longer provoke each other. Chevalier, give me your hand. Confess, you too forgot that you were speaking of the viceroy's son to his future brother-in-law, Lieutenant d'Ahlefeld."

At this name Schumacker, who had hitherto looked on with an indifferent or merely an impatient eye, sprang from his stone seat with a terrible cry: "D'Ahlefeld! A D'Ahlefeld here! Serpent! How could I fail to recognize the abominable father in his son? Leave me in peace in my cell! I was not condemned to the punishment of seeing you. It only needs, as he desired just now, that the son of Guldenlew should join the son of d'Ahlefeld! Traitors! cowards! why do they not come themselves to enjoy my tears of madness and rage? Abhorred, abhorred race! Son of d'Ahlefeld, leave me!"

The officer, at first bewildered by the sharpness of these invectives, soon lost his temper and found his speech.

"Silence, lunatic! Cease your devilish litanies!"

"Leave me! leave me!" repeated the old man; "and take my curse, my curse upon you and the miserable race of Guldenlew, which is to be allied to you!"

"By Heaven!" exclaimed the enraged officer, "you insult me doubly!"

Ordener restrained the lieutenant, who was beside himself with passion.

"Respect an old man, even if he be your enemy, Lieutenant; we have already one question to settle together, and I will answer to you for the prisoner's offences."

"So be it," said the lieutenant; "you contract a double debt. The fight will be to the death, for I have both my brother-in-law and myself to avenge. Think that with my gauntlet you pick up that of Ordener Guldenlew."

"Lieutenant d'Ahlefeld," replied Ordener, "you espouse the cause of the absent with a warmth which proves your generosity. Would there not be as much in showing pity for an unfortunate old man to whom adversity gives some right to be unjust?"

D'Ahlefeld was one of those souls in whom virtue is kindled by praise. He pressed Ordener's hand, and approached Schumacker, who, exhausted by his emotion, had sunk back upon the rock, in the tearful Ethel's arms.

"Lord Schumacker," said the officer, "you abused the privileges of your age, and I might have abused the privileges of my youth, if you had not found a champion. I enter your prison this morning for the last time, for I come to tell you that you may henceforth remain, by special order of the viceroy, free and unguarded in this donjon. Receive this good news from the lips of an enemy."

"Go!" said the old prisoner, in a hollow voice.

The lieutenant bowed and obeyed, inwardly pleased that he had won the approving glance of Ordener.

Schumacker sat for some time with folded arms and bent head, buried in thought. Suddenly he looked up at Ordener, who stood before him in silence.

"Well?" said he.

"My lord Count, Dispolsen was murdered."

The old man's head again drooped upon his breast. Ordener went on: "His assassin is a noted robber,— Hans of Iceland."

"Hans of Iceland!" said Schumacker.

"Hans of Iceland!" repeated Ethel.

"He robbed the captain," added Ordener.

"And so," said the old man, "you heard nothing of an iron casket, sealed with the arms of Griffenfeld?"

"No, my lord."

Schumacker hid his face in his hands.

"I will restore it to you, my lord Count; trust me. The murder was committed yesterday morning. Hans fled toward the north. I have a guide who knows all his haunts. I have often roamed through the mountains of Throndhjem. I shall overtake the thief."

Ethel turned pale. Schumacker rose; his expression was almost joyful, as if he believed that virtue still existed in men.

"Noble Ordener," he said, "farewell." And raising his hand to heaven, he disappeared among the bushes.

As Ordener turned, he saw Ethel upon the moss-grown rock, pale as an alabaster image on a black pedestal.

"Good God, Ethel!" he cried, rushing to her and supporting her in his arms, "what is the matter?"

"Oh!" replied the trembling girl in scarcely audible tones. "Oh, if you have, I do not say a spark of love, but of pity for me, sir, if you did not speak yesterday only to deceive me, if it be not to cause my death that you have deigned to enter this prison, Lord Ordener, my Ordener, give up, in Heaven's name, in the name of all the angels,— give up your mad scheme! Ordener, my beloved Ordener!" she continued,— and her tears flowed freely, her head rested on the young man's breast,—"make this sacrifice for me. Do not follow this robber, this frightful demon, with whom you would fight. In whose interest do you go, Ordener? Tell me, what interest can be dearer to you than that of the wretched woman whom but yesterday you called your beloved wife?"

She stopped, choked by sobs. Both arms were thrown around Ordener's neck, and her pleading eyes were fixed upon his.

"My adored Ethel, you are needlessly alarmed. God helps the righteous cause, and the interest in which I expose myself is no other than your own. That iron casket contains —"

Ethel interrupted him: "My interest! Have I any other interest than your life? Ordener, what will become of me?"

"Why do you think that I shall die, Ethel?"

"Ah! Then you do not know this Hans,— this infernal thief? Do you know what a monster you pursue? Do you know that he is lord of all the powers of darkness; that he overthrows mountains upon towns; that subterranean caverns crumble beneath his tread; that his breath extinguishes the beacons on every rocky coast? And how can you suppose, Ordener, that you can resist this giant aided by the demon, with your white arms and feeble sword?"

"And your prayers, Ethel, and the thought that I am fighting for you? Be assured, Ethel, the bandit's strength and power have been greatly exaggerated. He is a man like ourselves, who deals out death until he himself be slain."

"Then you will not heed me? My words are nothing to you? Tell me, what is to become of me if you go; if you roam from danger to danger, exposing — for I know not what earthly interest — your life, which is mine, by yielding it to a monster?"

Here the lieutenant's tales recurred anew to Ethel's fancy, exaggerated by her love and terror. She went on in a voice broken by sobs: "I assure you, dear Ordener, they deceived you who told you that he was only a man. You should believe me rather than others, Ordener; you know that I would not mislead you. Thousands have tried to do battle with him; he has destroyed whole regiments. I only wish others would tell you the same; you might believe them and not go."

Poor Ethel's prayers would doubtless have shaken Ordener's bold resolve, if he had not gone so far. The words uttered by Schumacker in his despair on the previous evening came back to him and strengthened him in his purpose.

"I might, my dear Ethel, tell you that I would not go, and yet carry out my plan; but I will never deceive you, even to console you. I ought not, I repeat, to hesitate between your tears and your true interests. Your fortune, your happiness, perhaps your life,— your very life, my Ethel,— are at stake." And he clasped her affectionately in his arms.

"And what do I care?" she returned, weeping. "My friend, my Ordener, my delight,— for you know that you are my sole delight,— do not give me a fearful and certain misery in exchange for a slight and doubtful misfortune. What is fortune or life to me?"

"Your father's life, Ethel, is also at stake."

She tore herself from his arms.

"My father's life?" she repeated in a low voice, turning pale.

"Yes, Ethel. This brigand, doubtless bribed by Count

Griffenfeld's enemies, has in his possession papers whose loss imperils the life of your father, already the object of so many attacks. I would die to win back those papers."

Ethel was pale and dumb for some moments. Her tears were dried, her heaving breast labored painfully; she looked on the ground with a dull and indifferent gaze,— the gaze of the condemned man as the axe is lifted over his head.

"My father's life!" she sighed.

Then she slowly turned her eyes toward Ordener.

"What you do is useless; but do it."

Ordener pressed her to his bosom. "Oh, noble girl, let me feel your heart beat against mine! Generous friend! I will soon return. Nay, you shall soon be mine; I would save your father, that I may better deserve to be his son. My Ethel, my beloved Ethel!"

Who can describe the emotions of a true heart which feels that it is appreciated by another noble heart? And if the love uniting these two similar souls be an indissoluble bond, who can paint their indescribable raptures? It seems as if they must feel, crowded into one brief instant, all the joy and all the glory of life, embellished by the charm of generous sacrifice.

"Oh, my Ordener, go; and if you never return, grief will kill me. I shall have that tardy consolation."

Both rose, and Ordener placed Ethel's arm within his own, and took that adored hand in his. They silently traversed the winding alleys of the gloomy garden, and reluctantly reached the gate which led into the world. There, Ethel, drawing a pair of tiny gold scissors from her bosom, cut off a curl of her beautiful black hair.

"Take it, Ordener; let it go with you; let it be happier than I am."

Ordener devotedly pressed to his lips this gift from his beloved.

She added: "Ordener, think of me; I will pray for you. My prayers may be as potent with God as your arms with the demon."

Ordener bowed before this angel. His soul was too full for words. They remained clasped in each other's arms for some time. As they were about to part, perhaps forever, Ordener, with a sad thrill, enjoyed the happiness of holding Ethel to his heart once more. At last, placing a long, pure kiss upon the sweet girl's clouded brow, he rushed violently down the winding stairs, which a moment later echoed with the sweet and painful word, "Farewell!"

X

You would never think her unhappy. Everything about her speaks of happiness. She wears necklaces of gold, and purple robes. When she goes out, a throng of vassals lie prostrate in her path, and obedient pages spread carpets before her feet. But none see her in the solitude that she loves; for then she weeps, and her husband does not see her tears.— I am that miserable being, the spouse of an honorable man, of a noble count, the mother of a child whose smiles stab me to the heart.— MATURIN: *Bertram.*

THE Countess d'Ahlefeld rose after a sleepless night to face a restless day. Half-reclining on a sofa, she pondered the bitter after-taste of corrupt pleasures, and the crime which wastes life in ecstasy without enjoyment and grief without alleviation. She thought of Musdœmon, whom guilty illusions had once painted in such seductive colors, so frightful now that she had penetrated his mask and seen his soul through his body. The wretched woman wept, not because she had been deceived, but because her eyes were no longer blinded,— tears of regret, but not of repentance; therefore her tears afforded her no relief. At this moment her door was opened. She dried her eyes quickly, and turned away, annoyed at being surprised, for she had given orders that she was not to be disturbed. On seeing Musdœmon her vexation changed to fright, which was dispelled when she found that her son Frederic was with him.

"Mother," cried the lieutenant, "how does it happen that

you are here? I thought you were at Bergen. Have our fine ladies taken to running about the country?"

The countess received Frederic with kisses, to which, like all spoiled children, he responded very coldly. This was possibly the worst of punishments to the unhappy woman. Frederic was her beloved son, the only creature in the world for whom she felt an unselfish affection; for a degraded woman often, even when all sense of wifely duty has vanished, retains some trace of the mother.

"I see, my son, that when you heard I was in Throndhjem you hastened to me at once."

"Oh, no; not I. I was bored to death at the fort; so I came to town, where I met Musdœmon, who brought me here."

The poor mother sighed heavily.

"By the way, mother," continued Frederic, "I am very glad to see you, for you can tell me whether knots of pink ribbon on the hem of the doublet are still worn in Copenhagen. Did you think to bring me a flask of that Oil of Youth to whiten the skin? You did not forget, I hope, the last French novel, or the pure gold lace which I asked you to get for my scarlet cloak, or those little combs which are so much used just now to hold the curls in place, or —"

The poor woman had brought nothing to her son, the only love she had on earth.

"My dear boy, I have been ill, and my sufferings prevented my thinking of your pleasures."

"Have you been ill, mother? Well, are you better now? By the bye, how is my pack of Norman hounds? I'll wager that they have neglected to bathe my monkey in rose-water every night. You'll see that I shall find my parrot Bilboa dead on my return. When I am away no one thinks of my pets."

"At least your mother thinks of you, my son," said his mother in a faltering voice.

Had this been the inexorable hour when the destroying angel hurls sinful souls into everlasting torments, he would

have felt pity for the torture which at this instant wrung the heart of the unfortunate countess. Musdœmon laughed in his sleeve.

"Sir Frederic," said he, "I see that the steel sword has no desire to rust in its iron scabbard. You do not care to lose the wholesome traditions of Copenhagen drawing-rooms within the walls of Munkholm. But yet, allow me to ask you, what is the use of all this Oil of Youth, these pink ribbons, and little combs? What is the use of all these preparations for a siege, if the only feminine fortress within the walls of Munkholm is impregnable?"

"Upon my honor, she is," laughingly responded Frederic. "Certainly, if I have failed, General Schack himself would fail. But how can you surprise a fortress where nothing is exposed,— where every post is unremittingly guarded? How can you contend against chemisettes which cover all but the neck, against sleeves that hide the whole arm, so that only the face and hands remain to prove that the young woman is not as black as the Emperor of Mauritania? My dear tutor, you yourself would have to go to school again. Believe me, that fort is not to be taken where Modesty is garrisoned."

"Indeed!" said Musdœmon. "But may not Modesty be forced to surrender, if Love lay siege to it, instead of confining himself to a blockade of delicate attentions?"

"Labor in vain, my dear friend. Love is already in possession of the place, but he serves to reinforce Modesty."

"Ah, Sir Frederic, this is news indeed,— with Love on your side —"

"And who tells you, Musdœmon, that he is on my side?"

"On whose, then?" exclaimed Musdœmon and the countess, who had listened in silence until now, but who was reminded of Ordener by the lieutenant's last words.

Frederic was about to answer, and was already preparing a spicy account of the scene of the previous night, when he remembered the silence prescribed by the etiquette of duelling, which changed his gayety to confusion.

"I' faith," said he, "I don't know,— that of some clown perhaps, some retainer."

"Some soldier of the garrison?" said Musdœmon, laughing heartily.

"What, my son!" exclaimed the countess in her turn. "Are you sure that she loves a rustic, a serf? What luck, if you are sure of it!"

"Oh, of course I am sure. But it's not one of the soldiers of the garrison," added the lieutenant, with an offended air. "I am sure enough of what I say, however, to beg you, mother, to cut short my very unnecessary exile at that confounded castle."

The countess's face brightened on hearing of the young girl's fall. Ordener Guldenlew's eagerness to visit Munkholm now appeared to her in very different colors. She gave her son the benefit of them.

"You must give us an account, Frederic, of Ethel Schumacker's loves. I am not surprised; the daughter of a boor can only love a boor. Meantime, do not curse that castle which yesterday afforded you the honor of the first advances towards an acquaintance, from a certain distinguished personage."

"What, mother!" said the lieutenant, staring at her,— "what distinguished personage?"

"A truce to jests, my son. Did no one visit you yesterday? You see that I know all about it."

"I' faith, more than I do, Mother. Deuce take me if I saw a face yesterday, except those of the masks carved beneath the cornices of those old towers."

"What, Frederic! You saw nobody?"

"No one, mother!"

In omitting to mention his antagonist of the donjon, Frederic obeyed the law which bound him to silence; besides, could that clodhopper be counted as any one?"

"What!" said his mother. "Did not the viceroy's son visit Munkholm last night?"

The lieutenant laughed.

"The viceroy's son! Indeed, mother, you must be dreaming, or else you are joking."

"Neither, my son. Who was on guard yesterday?"

"I myself, mother."

"And you did not see Baron Ordener?"

"Not a bit of it," repeated the lieutenant.

"But consider, my boy, he may have entered in disguise. You never saw him, having been brought up at Copenhagen, while he was educated at Throndhjem. Remember all the stories about his caprices and whims, and his eccentric ideas. Are you sure, my son, that you did not see any one?"

Frederic hesitated an instant.

"No," he cried, "no one. I can say no more."

"Then," replied the countess, "I suppose the baron did not go to Munkholm."

Musdœmon, at first surprised like Frederic, had listened attentively. He interrupted the countess.

"Allow me, noble lady. Master Frederic, pray tell me the name of the dependent loved by Schumacker's daughter."

He repeated his question; for Frederic, who for some moments had been lost in thought, did not hear him.

"I do not know; or rather — no, I do not know."

"And how, sir, do you know that she loves a dependent?"

"Did I say so? A dependent? — well, yes; he is a dependent."

The awkwardness of the lieutenant's position increased momentarily. This series of questions, the ideas to which they gave rise, his enforced silence, threw him into a confusion which he feared he could not much longer control.

"Upon my word, Mr. Musdœmon, and you, my lady mother, if a mania for asking questions be the latest fashion, you may amuse yourselves by questioning each other. For my part, I'll have nothing more to say to you."

And flinging open the door, he disappeared, leaving them plunged in an abyss of doubt. He hastened down into the courtyard, for he heard Musdœmon's voice calling him back.

He mounted his horse and rode toward the harbor, where

he intended to take a boat for Munkholm, thinking that there he might find the stranger who had given rise to such serious thoughts in the greatest feather-brain of a feather-brained capital.

"If that was Ordener Guldenlew," he reflected, "then my poor Ulrica — But no; it is impossible that he could be such a fool as to prefer the penniless daughter of a prisoner of State to the wealthy daughter of an all-powerful minister. At any rate, Schumacker's daughter can be no more than a caprice; and there is nothing to hinder a man who has a wife from having a mistress too; in fact, it is quite the stylish thing. But no, it was not Ordener. The viceroy's son would never wear such a shabby jacket. And that old black plume without a buckle, beaten by the wind and rain! And that great cloak, big enough for a tent! And that disordered hair, with no combs and no frizzes! And those boots with iron spurs, covered with mud and dust! Indeed, it could never be he. Baron Thorwick is a knight of the Dannebrog. That fellow wore no decoration. If I were a knight of the Dannebrog, I believe I should wear the collar of the order to bed. Oh, no! He had never even read 'Clelia.' No, it was not the viceroy's son."

XI

If man could still retain his warmth of soul when experience has taught him, if he could inherit the legacies of time without bending beneath the weight, he would never attack those exalted virtues whose first lesson is ever self-sacrifice.—MADAME DE STAEL: *Germany.*

"WELL, what is it? You, Poël! what brings you here?"

"Your Excellency forgets that you yourself summoned me."

"Did I?" said the general. "Oh, I wanted you to hand me that portfolio."

Poël handed the governor the portfolio, which he could have reached himself by stretching out his arm.

His Excellency mechanically replaced it without opening it; then he turned over some papers in an absent-minded way.

"Poël, I was going to ask you — What time is it?"

"Six o'clock in the morning," replied the general's servant, who was facing the clock.

"I was going to tell you, Poël — What is the news to-day at the palace?"

The general went on shuffling his papers, writing a few words on each with a preoccupied air.

"Nothing, your Excellency, except that we are still expecting my noble master, about whom I see the general is anxious."

The general rose from his big writing-table, and looked at Poël somewhat angrily.

"Your eyes are very poor, Poël. I, anxious about Ordener, indeed! I know the reason for his absence; I do not expect him yet."

General Levin de Knud was so jealous of his authority that he would have considered it compromised had a subaltern been able to guess his secret thoughts, and learn that Ordener had acted without his orders.

"Poël," he added, "you may go."

The servant left the room.

"Really," exclaimed the general when he was left alone, "Ordener uses and abuses his privileges. A blade too often bent will break. To make me spend a night in sleepless impatience! To expose General Levin to the sarcasms of a chancellor's wife and the conjectures of a servant! And all this that an aged enemy may have those first greetings which are due to an old friend! Ordener! Ordener! whims are destructive of liberty! Let him come, only let him come now, deuce take me if I don't receive him as gunpowder does fire,— I'll blow him up! To expose the governor of Throndhjem to a servant's conjectures and a she-chancellor's sarcasms! Let him come!"

The general went on making marginal notes on his papers without reading them, so all-absorbing was his ill-temper.

"General! my noble father!" cried a familiar voice; and Ordener clasped in his arms the old man, who did not even try to repress a cry of joy.

"Ordener, my good Ordener! Zounds! how glad I am!" He collected his thoughts in the middle of his phrase. "I am glad, Baron, that you have learned to control your feelings.

"You seem pleased to see me again. It was probably to mortify your flesh, that you deprived yourself of that pleasure for a whole day and night."

"Father, you have often told me that an unfortunate enemy should be put before a fortunate friend. I come from Munkholm."

"Of course," said the general, "when the enemy's misfortune is imminent. But Schumacker's future —"

"Looks more threatening than ever. Noble General, there is an odious plot on foot against that unlucky man. Men born his friends, would ruin him; a man born his foe, must serve him."

The general, whose face had gradually cleared, interrupted Ordener.

"Very good, my dear Ordener. But what are you talking about? Schumacker is under my protection. What men? What plots?"

Ordener could scarcely have replied plainly to this question. He had but very vague gleams of light, very uncertain suspicions as to the position of the man for whom he was about to expose his life. Many will think that he acted foolishly; but young hearts do what they think right by instinct, and not from calculation; and besides, in this world, where prudence is so barren and wisdom so caustic, who denies that generosity is folly? All is relative on earth, where all is limited; and virtue would be the greatest madness if there were no God behind man. Ordener was at the age to believe and to be believed. He risked his life trustingly.

Even the general accepted reasons which would not have borne calm discussion.

"What plots? What men? Good father, in a few days I shall have solved the mystery; then you shall know all that I know. I must start off again to-night."

"What!" cried the old man, "can you spare me but a few hours? Where are you going? Why are you going, my dear son?"

"You have sometimes allowed me, my noble father, to perform a praiseworthy act in secret."

"Yes, my brave boy; but you are going without knowing why, and you know what an important affair requires your presence here."

"My father has given me a month to consider the matter, and I shall devote that time to the interests of another. A good deed is often fruitful in good advice. Besides, we will see about it on my return."

"How!" anxiously asked the general; "don't you like this match? They say that Ulrica d'Ahlefeld is very beautiful. Tell me, have you seen her?"

"I believe I have," said Ordener. "Yes, I believe that she is handsome."

"Well?" rejoined the governor.

"Well," said Ordener, "she will never be my wife."

These cold, decisive words startled the general as if he had received a violent blow. He recalled the suspicions of the haughty countess.

"Ordener," said he, shaking his head, "I ought to be wise, for I have sinned. Well, I am nothing but an old fool! Ordener, the prisoner has a daughter —"

"Oh," cried the young man, "General, I wanted to speak to you of her. I ask your protection, father, for that helpless and oppressed young girl."

"Indeed," said the governor, gravely, "your request is urgent."

Ordener recovered himself.

"And why should it not be urgent for a poor captive

whose life, and, what is far more precious, her honor, is in danger?"

"Life! honor! Why, I still govern here, and I know nothing of all these horrors! Explain yourself."

"Noble father, the lives of the prisoner and his defenceless daughter are threatened by an infernal plot."

"What you say is serious. What proofs have you?"

"The oldest son of a powerful family is even now at Munkholm. He is there to seduce Countess Ethel; he told me so himself."

The general started back.

"Good God! Poor, forlorn creature! Ordener, Ordener, Ethel and Schumacker are under my protection. Who is this wretch? What is the name of the family?"

Ordener approached the general and wrung his hand.

"It is the d'Ahlefeld family."

"D'Ahlefeld!" said the governor. "Yes, it is all clear. Lieutenant Frederic is at Munkholm now. My noble Ordener, would they marry you to such a brood! I understand your aversion, Ordener."

The old man, folding his arms, thought for some moments, then clasped Ordener in his embrace.

"Ordener, you may go. Your friends shall not lack protection; I will guard them. Yes, go; you are perfectly right. That infernal Countess d'Ahlefeld is here; did you know it?"

"The noble lady, Countess d'Ahlefeld," said the usher, opening the door.

At that name, Ordener mechanically withdrew to the back of the room; and the countess, entering without seeing him, exclaimed,—

"General, your pupil is deceiving you. He never went to Munkholm."

"Indeed?" said the general.

"Good gracious, no! My son Frederic, who has just left the palace, was on duty yesterday in the donjon, and he saw no one."

"Really, noble lady?" repeated the general.

"So," added the countess, with a triumphant smile, "you need not wait for your Ordener any longer, General."

The governor was cold and calm.

"I am no longer expecting him, Countess, it is true."

"General," said the countess, turning, "I thought we were alone. Who is this?"

The countess looked searchingly at Ordener, who bowed.

"Really," she continued, "I never saw him but once; still, if it were not for that dress, I should say — General, is this the viceroy's son?"

"Himself, noble lady," said Ordener, with another bow.

The countess smiled.

"In that case, permit a lady who will soon be more closely allied to you, to ask where you were yesterday, Count?"

"Count! I do not think that I am so unfortunate as to have lost my noble father yet, my lady countess."

"Certainly not; that was not my meaning. It is better to become a count by taking a wife than by losing a father."

"One is no better than the other, noble lady."

The countess, although slightly confused, made up her mind to laugh heartily.

"Come, the stories that I have heard are true. Your manners are somewhat boorish; but you will grow more used to accepting gifts from fair hands when Ulrica d'Ahlefeld has put the chain of the Order of the Elephant about your neck."

"A chain indeed!" said Ordener.

"You will see, General Levin," resumed the countess, whose laugh was somewhat forced, "that your intractable pupil will not consent to receive his colonel's brevet from a lady's hand either."

"You are right, Countess," replied Ordener; "a man who wears a sword ought not to owe his epaulettes to a petticoat."

The great lady's face darkened.

"Ho! ho! whence comes the baron? Is it really true that your Highness was not at Munkholm yesterday?"

"Noble lady, I do not always satisfy all questions. But, General, you and I will meet again."

Then, pressing the old man's hand and bowing to the countess, he quitted the room, leaving the lady, amazed at the extent of her own ignorance, alone with the governor, who was furious at the amount of his knowledge.

XII

The fellow that sits next him now, parts bread with him, and pledges the breath of him in a divided draught, is the readiest man to kill him.—SHAKESPEARE: *Timon of Athens.*

IF the reader will transport himself to the highway leading from Throndhjem to Skongen, a narrow, stony road which skirts Throndhjem Fjord until it reaches the village of Vygla, he will not fail to hear the footsteps of two travellers, who left the city by what is known as Skongen Gate, at nightfall, and are rapidly climbing the range of hills up which the path to Vygla winds. Both are wrapped in cloaks. One walks with a firm, youthful step, his body erect and his head well up; the point of his sword hangs below the hem of his cloak, and in spite of the darkness, we see the plume in his cap waving in the breeze. The other is rather taller than his companion, but slightly bent; upon his back is a hump, doubtless formed by a wallet which is hidden by his large black mantle, whose ragged edges bear witness to its long and faithful service. His only weapon is a stick, with which he supports his rapid and uneven steps.

If darkness prevent our reader from distinguishing the features of the two travellers, he may perhaps recognize them by the conversion which one of them opens after an hour of silent, consequently tedious travel.

"Master, my young master! we have reached the point from which Vygla tower and Throndhjem spires may both be seen at the same time. Before us, on the horizon, that black mass is the tower; behind us lies the cathedral; its flying but-

tresses, darker still against the sky, stand out like the skeleton ribs of a mammoth."

"Is Vygla far from Skongen?" asked the other wayfarer.

"We have to cross the Ordals, sir; we shall not reach Skongen before three o'clock in the morning."

"What hour is that striking now?"

"Good heavens, master! you make me shiver. Yes, that is Throndhjem clock; the wind brings the sound to us. That's a sign of storm. The northwest wind brings clouds."

"In truth, the stars have all disappeared behind us."

"Pray let us make haste, my noble lord, the storm is close at hand, and Gill's corpse and my escape may already have been discovered in the city. Let us make haste!"

"Willingly. Old man, your load seems heavy; give it to me, I am younger and stronger than you."

"No, indeed, noble master; it is not for the eagle to carry the shell of the tortoise. I am too far beneath you for you to burden yourself with my wallet."

"But, old man, if it tires you? It seems heavy. What have you in it? Just now you stumbled, and it clinked as if there were iron in it."

The old man sprang away from the young man.

"It clinked, master? Oh, no! you are mistaken. It contains nothing — but food, clothes. No, it does not tire me, sir."

The young man's friendly offer seemed to give his old comrade a fright which he tried to disguise.

"Well," replied the young man, without noticing it, "if your bundle does not tire you, keep it."

The old man, although his fears were set at rest, made haste to change the conversation.

"It is hard to travel by night as fugitives, over a road which it would be so agreeable, sir, to take by day as observers of Nature. On the shores of the fjord, to our left, are a quantity of Runic stones, upon which may be studied inscriptions traced, they say, by gods and giants. On our right, behind the rocks at the edge of the road, lies the salt-

marsh of Sciold, which undoubtedly communicates with the sea by some subterranean passage; for the sea lobworm is caught there, that strange fish, which, as your servant and guide discovered, eats sand. It was in the Vygla tower, which we are now approaching, that the pagan king Vermond roasted the breasts of Saint Etheldreda, that glorious martyr, with wood from the true cross, brought to Copenhagen by Olaf III., and conquered from him by the Norwegian king. They say that since then repeated attempts have been made to turn that cursed tower into a chapel; every cross placed there, is consumed in its turn by fire from heaven."

At this instant a tremendous flash of lightning covered the fjord, the hill, the rocks, the tower, and faded before the two travellers could distinguish any of these objects. They instinctively paused, and the lightning was almost immediately followed by a violent peal of thunder, which echoed from cloud to cloud across the sky, and from rock to rock along the earth.

They raised their eyes. All the stars were hidden, huge clouds rolled rapidly over one another, and the tempest hung like an avalanche above their heads. The tremendous blast, before which all these masses fled, had not yet descended to the trees, which no breath stirred, and upon which no drop of rain had as yet fallen. The roar of the storm was heard aloft, and this, with the noise of the fjord, was the only sound to be heard in the darkness of the night, made doubly dark by the blackness of the tempest.

This tumultuous silence was suddenly interrupted, close beside the travellers, by a growl which made the old man tremble.

"Omnipotent God!" he cried, grasping the young man's arm, "that is either the laugh of the Devil in the storm, or the voice of —"

A fresh flash, a fresh peal, cut short his words. The tempest then burst with fury, as if it had only waited this signal. The travellers drew their cloaks closer, to protect themselves alike from the rain falling in torrents from the clouds, and

from the thick dust swept in whirlwinds from the dry earth by a howling blast.

"Old man," said the youth, "a flash of lightning just now showed me Vygla tower on our right; let us leave the path and seek shelter there."

"Shelter in the Cursed Tower!" exclaimed the old man; "may Saint Hospitius protect us! Think, young master; that tower is deserted."

"So much the better, old man! We shall not be kept waiting at the door."

"Think of the abominable act which polluted it!"

"Well, let it purify itself by sheltering us. Come, old man, follow me. I tell you that on such a night I would test the hospitality of a den of thieves."

Then, in spite of the old man's remonstrances, he grasped his arm and hastened toward the building, which, as the frequent flashes showed him, was close at hand. As they approached, they saw a light in one of the loopholes of the tower.

"You see," said the young man, "that this tower is not deserted. You feel easier now, no doubt."

"Oh, my God! my God!" cried the old man, "where are you taking me, master? Saint Hospitius forbid that I should enter that oratory of the Devil!"

They had now reached the foot of the tower. The young traveller knocked loudly at the new door of this much dreaded ruin.

"Calm yourself, old man. Some pious hermit has come hither to sanctify this profane abode by dwelling in it."

"No," said his comrade, "I will not enter. I'll answer for it that no monk can live here, unless he has one of Beelzebub's seven chains for a chaplet."

However, a light had descended from one narrow window to another, and now shone through the key-hole.

"You are very late, Nychol!" cried a sharp voice; "the gallows were erected at noon, and it takes but six hours to come from Skongen to Vygla. Did you have an extra job?"

These questions were asked just as the door was opened. The woman who opened it, seeing two strange faces instead of the one which she expected, uttered a frightened, threatening shriek, and started back.

Her appearance was by no means reassuring. She was tall; she held above her head an iron lamp, which threw a bright light upon her face. Her livid features, her bony, angular figure, were corpse-like, and her hollow eyes emitted ominous flashes like those of a funeral torch. She wore a red serge petticoat, reaching to her bare feet, and apparently stained in spots with deeper red. Her fleshless breast was half covered by a man's jacket of the same color, the sleeves of which were cut off at the elbow. The wind, coming in at the open door, blew about her head her long gray hair, which was insecurely fastened with a strip of bark, and lent an added ferocity to her savage face.

"Good lady," said the younger of the new-comers, "the rain falls in floods; you have a roof, and we have gold."

His aged comrade plucked him by the cloak, whispering, "Oh, master, what are you saying? If this be not the abode of the Devil, it is the habitation of some robber. Our money, instead of protecting us, will be our ruin."

"Hush!" said the young man; and drawing a purse from his bosom, he displayed it to his hostess, repeating his request as he did so.

The woman, recovering from her surprise, studied them in turn with fixed and haggard eyes.

"Strangers," she cried at last, as if she had not heard their voices, "have your guardian angels forsaken you? What would you with the cursed inhabitants of the Cursed Tower? Strangers, they were no mortals who sent you here for shelter, or they would have told you: Better are the lightning and the storm than the hearth within Vygla tower. The only living man who may enter here, enters the abode of no other human being; he only leaves solitude for a crowd; he lives only by death; he has no place save in the curses of men; he serves their vengeance only; he

exists by their crimes alone; and the vilest criminal, in the hour of his doom, vents on him the universal scorn, and feels that he has a right to add to it his own contempt. Strangers! You must indeed be strangers, for your foot does not yet shrink with horror from the threshold of this tower. Disturb no longer the she-wolf and her cubs; return to the road travelled by the rest of mankind, and if you would not be shunned by your fellows, do not tell them that your face ever caught the rays of the lamp of the dwellers in Vygla tower." With these words, pointing to the door, she advanced toward the two travellers. The old man trembled in every limb, and looked imploringly at the young man, who, understanding nothing of the tall woman's words because of the great rapidity of her speech, thought her crazy, and was in no wise disposed to go out again into the rain, which still fell heavily.

"Faith, good hostess, you describe a strange character, whose acquaintance I would not lose this chance of making."

"His acquaintance, young man, is soon made, sooner ended. If your evil spirit urge you to seek it, go kill some living man, or profane the dead."

"Profane the dead!" repeated the old man, in a faltering voice, hiding himself in his companion's shadow.

"I scarcely comprehend," the latter said, "your suggestions, which seem somewhat indirect; it is shorter to stay here. No one but a madman would continue his journey in such weather."

"Unhappy man!" exclaimed the woman, "do not knock at the door of one who can open no door save that of the tomb."

"And if the door of the tomb should indeed open for me with that of your abode, woman, it shall not be said that I shrank from an ill-omened word. My sword is my safeguard. Come, close the door, for the wind is cold, and take this money."

"Bah! what is your money to me!" rejoined their hostess; "precious in your hands, in mine it would become more vile than pewter. Well, stay if you will, and give me the

gold. It may protect you from the storms of Heaven; it cannot save me from the scorn of men. Nay; you pay a higher price for hospitality than others pay for murder. Wait here an instant, and give me your gold. Yes, it is the first time that a man's hands have entered here filled with gold, without being stained with blood."

So saying, after putting down her lamp and barricading the door, she disappeared beneath the arch of a dark staircase built at the back of the room.

While the old man shuddered, and, invoking the glorious Saint Hospitius under every name, cordially, but in an undertone, cursed his young companion's imprudence, the latter took the light and surveyed the large circular apartment in which they had been left. What he saw as he approached the wall, startled him; and the old man, who had watched him closely, exclaimed,—

"Good God, master! a gallows?"

A tall gallows, in fact, rested against the wall, reaching to the keystone of the damp, high, arched roof.

"Yes," said the young man, "and here are saws of wood and iron, chains and iron collars; here is a rack, and huge pincers hanging over it."

"Holy saints of Paradise!" cried the old man; "where are we?"

The young man calmly went on with his inspection.

"This is a roll of hempen cord; here are furnaces and caldrons; this part of the wall is covered with tongs and scalpels; here are leathern whips with steel tips, an axe and a mace."

"This must be the wardrobe of hell!" interrupted the old man, terrified by this dreadful catalogue.

"Here," continued the other, "are copper screws, wheels with teeth of bronze, a box of huge nails, and a lever. In truth, these are sorry furnishings. It may seem to you hard that my impatience should have brought you hither with me."

"Really, you agree to that!"

The old man was more dead than alive.

"Do not be frightened. What matters it where you are? I am with you."

"A fine protection!" muttered the old man, whose increasing terror modified his fear and respect for his young companion; "a sword three feet long against a gibbet nine feet high!"

The big, red woman returned, and again taking up the iron lamp, beckoned to the travellers to follow her. They cautiously climbed a narrow, rickety flight of stairs built in the thickness of the tower wall. At each loop-hole a blast of wind and rain threatened to extinguish the quivering flame of the lamp, which their hostess shielded with her long transparent hands. After stumbling more than once upon a rolling stone, in which the old man's alarmed fancy saw human bones scattered over the stairs, they reached the next floor, and found themselves in a circular hall like the one below. In the centre, according to Gothic custom, burned a huge fire, the smoke of which escaped through a hole in the roof, but not without perceptibly obscuring the atmosphere of the hall. It was the light from this fire, combined with that of the iron lamp, which had caught the notice of the two wayfarers. A spit, loaded with fresh-killed meat, revolved before the flames. The old man turned from it in disgust.

"It was upon that execrable hearth," said he to his comrade, "that the embers of the true cross consumed the limbs of a saint." A rude table stood some distance away from the fire. The woman invited the travellers to be seated at it.

"Strangers," said she, placing the lamp before them, "supper will soon be ready, and my husband will probably make haste to get here, for fear the midnight ghost should carry him off as it passes the Cursed Tower."

Ordener — for the reader has doubtless already guessed that he and his guide, Benignus Spiagudry, were the two travellers — could now examine at his leisure the strange dis-

guise, in the concoction of which Benignus had exhausted all the resources of his fertile fancy, spurred on by a dread of recognition and capture. The poor fugitive had exchanged his reindeer-skin garments for a full suit of black, left at the Spladgest by a famous Throndhjem grammarian, who drowned himself in despair because he could not find out why "Jupiter" changed to "Jovis" in the genitive. His wooden shoes gave place to a stout pair of postilion boots, whose owner had been killed by his horses, in which his slender shanks had so much spare room that he could not have walked without the aid of half a truss of hay. The huge wig of an elegant young Frenchman, slain by thieves just outside the city gates, concealed his bald pate and floated over his sharp, crooked shoulders. One of his eyes was covered with a plaster, and, thanks to a pot of paint which he had found in the pocket of an old maid who died of disappointed love, his pale hollow cheeks were tinged with an unwonted crimson, an ornament which the rain had now divided with his chin. Before seating himself, he carefully placed beneath him the pack which he carried on his back, first wrapping it in his old mantle, and while he absorbed his comrade's entire attention, all his thoughts seemed centred in the roast which his hostess was watching, toward which he cast ever and anon a glance of anxiety and alarm. Broken ejaculations fell from his lips at intervals:

"Human flesh! *Horridas epulas!* Cannibals! A feast for Moloch! *Ne pueros coram populo Medea trucidet!* Where are we? — Atreus — Druidess — Irmensul — The Devil struck Lycaon with lightning —" Finally he exclaimed: "Good Heavens! God be thanked! I see a tail!"

Ordener, who, having watched and listened attentively, had closely followed the train of his thoughts, could not help smiling.

"That tail need not comfort you. It may be the Devil's hind quarter."

Spiagudry did not hear this pleasantry. His eyes were riv-

eted on the back of the room. He trembled, and whispered in Ordener's ear,—

"Master, look yonder, on that heap of straw, in the shadow!"

"Well, what is it?" said Ordener.

"Three naked bodies,— the corpses of three children!"

"Some one is knocking at the door," cried the red woman, who was squatting by the fire.

In fact, a knock, followed by two louder raps, was heard above the ever-increasing din of the storm.

"It is he at last! It is Nychol!"

And seizing the lamp, their hostess hurried downstairs.

The two travellers had not had time to resume their conversation, when they heard a confused murmur of voices below, in the midst of which they caught these words, uttered in a voice which made Spiagudry start and shiver:

"Be quiet, woman; we shall stay. The thunderbolt enters without waiting for the door to be opened."

Spiagudry pressed closer to Ordener.

"Master, master," he quavered, "we are lost!"

The sound of footsteps was heard on the stairs, and two men in ecclesiastic dress entered the room, followed by the startled hostess.

One of these men was tall, and wore the black gown and close-clipped hair of a Lutheran minister; the other was shorter, and wore a hermit's robe tied with a girdle of rope.

The hood drawn over his face concealed all but his long black beard, and his hands were entirely hidden by his flowing sleeves.

When he saw these two peaceful strangers, Spiagudry recovered from the terror which the peculiar voice of one of them had caused.

"Don't be alarmed, my good lady," said the minister. "Christian ministers do good even to those who injure them; why should they harm those who help them? We humbly beg for shelter. If the reverend gentleman with me spoke

harshly to you just now he was wrong to forget the gentle voice recommended to us in our ordination vows. Alas! the most saintly may err. I lost my way on the road from Skongen to Throndhjem, and could find no guide through the darkness, no shelter from the storm. This reverend brother, whom I encountered, being like myself far from home, deigned to allow me to accompany him hither. He praised your kind hospitality, dear lady; doubtless he was not mistaken. Do not say to us, like the wicked shepherd, '*Advene, cur intras?*' Take us in, worthy hostess, and God will save your crops from the storm, God will protect your flocks from the tempest, as you give a refuge to travellers who have gone astray!"

"Old man," broke in the woman in a fierce voice, "I have neither crops nor flocks."

"Well, if you are poor, God blesses the poor more than the rich. You and your husband shall live to a good old age, respected, not for your wealth, but for your virtues; your children shall grow up blessed in the esteem of all men, and be what their father was before them."

"Silence!" cried the hostess. "If they continue to be what we are, our children must grow old as we have, scorned by all,— a scorn handed down from generation to generation. Silence, old man! Your blessing turns to curses on our heads."

"Heavens!" returned the minister, "who then are you? Amid what crimes do you pass your life?"

"What do you call crime? What do you call virtue? We enjoy one privilege,— we can possess no virtue and commit no crime."

"The woman's reason wanders," said the minister, turning to the little hermit, who was drying his coarse robe before the fire.

"No, priest!" replied the woman. "Learn where you are. I would rather inspire horror than pity. I am not mad, but the wife of —"

A prolonged and violent knocking at the door drowned

her words, to the great disappointment of Spiagudry and Ordener, who had silently listened to the dialogue.

"Cursed," muttered the red woman, "be the mayor and council of Skongen, who gave us this tower so near the high-road for our dwelling! Perhaps that is not Nychol, now."

Still, she took up the lamp.

"After all, if it be another traveller, what matters it? The brook can flow where the torrent has passed."

The four travellers, left alone, examined each other by the firelight. Spiagudry, terrified at first by the hermit's voice, and then reassured by his black beard, might have trembled afresh if he had seen the piercing eye with which the monk observed him from beneath his cowl.

In the general silence the minister ventured a question: "Brother monk, I presume that you are one of the Catholic priests who escaped from the last persecution, and that you were returning to your retreat when I was fortunate enough to meet you. Can you tell me where we are?"

The broken door of the ruined staircase opened before the hermit could answer.

"Woman, let a storm but burst, and there is always a crowd to sit at our hated board and take shelter beneath our accursed roof."

"Nychol," replied the wife, "I could not help it!"

"What do I care how many guests you have, provided they pay? Money is as well earned by lodging a traveller as by strangling a thief."

The speaker paused at the door, and the four strangers had ample opportunity to examine him. He was a man of colossal size, dressed, like their hostess, in red serge. His enormous head seemed to rest directly upon his broad shoulders, in strong contrast with his gracious lady's long, bony neck. He had a low forehead, flat nose, and thick eyebrows; his eyes, rimmed with red, shone like burning coals in a pool of blood. The lower part of his face was shaved smooth, exposing his big mouth, whose black lips were parted in a

hideous grin, like the gaping edges of a never-healing wound. Two wisps of frizzled beard, extending from his cheeks to his chin, made his face seem square when seen from the front. He wore a gray felt hat, which dripped with rain, and which he did not deign to remove in the presence of the four travellers.

As he looked at him, Benignus Spiagudry uttered a cry of fright, and the Lutheran minister turned away, struck with horror and surprise; while the master of the house, recognizing, addressed him thus: "What, are you here, minister! Indeed, I did not expect to have the pleasure of seeing your scared and woebegone face again to-day."

The priest mastered his first feeling of repulsion. His face became serious and serene.

"And I, my son, rejoice at the chance which has brought together the shepherd and the lost sheep, to the end, no doubt, that the sheep may return to the fold."

"Ah, by Haman's gibbet," rejoined the other with a loud laugh, "this is the first time that ever I was compared to a sheep! Believe me, Father, if you would flatter the vulture, you must not call him a dove."

"He who can change the vulture to a dove, consoles, my son, and does not flatter. You think that I fear you, and I only pity you!"

"You must indeed have a goodly store of pity. I should have fancied that you had exhausted it all on that poor devil to whom you displayed your cross this morning in the hope of hiding my gallows from his eyes."

"That unfortunate man," replied the priest, "was less to be pitied than you; for he wept, and you laugh. Happy is he who learns in the moment of atonement how much less powerful is man's arm than the word of God!"

"Well said, Father!" replied the host, with a horrid and ironical mirth. "Happy is he who weeps! That fellow to-day, moreover, had no other fault than that of loving the king so much that he could not live without making his Majesty's picture upon little copper medals, which he then

gilded artistically to render them more worthy of the royal effigy. Our gracious sovereign was not ungrateful, and rewarded him for such a display of affection with a fine hempen decoration, which, let me inform my worthy guests, was conferred upon him this very day, in Skongen market-place, by me, lord chancellor of the Order of the Gibbet, assisted by this gentleman here present, grand chaplain of the said order."

"Stop, wretched man!" broke in the priest. "How can he who punishes forget that punishment awaits us all? Listen to the thunder —"

"Well, what is thunder? Satan's laughter."

"Good God, he has just looked on death, and he blasphemes!"

"A truce to your sermons, old fool!" cried the host, in a loud, angry tone, "unless you would curse the angel of darkness who has brought us together twice in one day, in the same carriage and under the same roof. Imitate your friend the hermit, who is silent, for he longs to be back again in his cave at Lynrass. I thank you, brother monk, for the blessing which I see you bestow upon the Cursed Tower every morning as you cross the hill; but the fact is that you always seemed tall to me until now, and that black beard of yours looked white. Are you sure that you are the hermit of Lynrass,— the only hermit in the province of Throndhjem?"

"I am the only one," said the hermit in a hollow voice.

"We are, then," rejoined his host, "the two recluses of the district — Hollo, Becky, make haste with that roast lamb, for I am hungry. I was detained at Burlock Village by that confounded Dr. Manryll, who would only give me twelve escalins for the corpse. That miserable fellow who keeps the Throndhjem Spladgest gets forty. Ha, Master Periwig, what's the matter with you? Are you going to tumble over? By the way, Becky, have you finished the skeleton of that famous magician, Orgivius the poisoner? It is high time it was delivered to the Bergen Museum. Did you send one of

your little pigs to the mayor of Loevig to get what he owes me,— four double crowns for boiling a witch and two alchemists, and for removing several chains from the cross-beams of his tribunal, which they disfigured; twenty escalins for hanging Ishmael Typhaine, a Jew against whom the good bishop entered a complaint; and a crown for putting a new wooden arm to the stone gallows of the tower."

"Your wages," replied his wife in sour tones, "remain in the mayor's hands, because your son forgot to take a wooden spoon to receive the money, and none of the judge's servant's were willing to put it into his hand."

The husband frowned.

"Only let their necks fall into my hands, and they shall see whether I need a wooden spoon to touch them. But we must manage the mayor carefully, for it is to him that robber Ivar complained that he was put to the rack by me, and not by a regular executioner, alleging that, as he had not yet been tried, he was not upon my level. By the way, wife, do keep the children from playing with my nippers and pincers; they have spoiled all my tools, so that I really could not use them to-day. Where are they, the little monsters?" added the man, going up to the heap of straw where Spiagudry had fancied that he saw three dead bodies. "Here they are in bed; they sleep through all our noise as soundly as if they had been hanged."

From these words, whose grim horror was in strong contrast with the speaker's mirth and fierce, frightful composure, the reader will have guessed who was the inhabitant of the Vygla tower. Spiagudry, who upon his first appearance recognized him from having often seen him act in his official capacity in the Throndhjem market-place, felt ready to faint, particularly when he considered his own powerful personal motive for dreading this awful personage. He leaned over to Ordener, and said in scarcely articulate tones, "It is Nychol Orugix, the hangman of the province of Throndhjem!"

Ordener, at first struck with horror, shuddered, and regretted both his journey and the storm. But soon a peculiar

feeling of curiosity took possession of him, and although he pitied his old guide's distress and terror, he devoted his entire attention to observing the speech and manners of the singular being before him,— just as a man might listen eagerly to the growl of a hyena or the roar of a tiger, brought from the desert to one of our great cities. Poor Benignus was far from being sufficiently easy in his mind to make psychological observations. Hidden behind Ordener, he drew his mantle closely about him, raised a restless hand to his plaster, pulled the back of his loose periwig over his face, and sighed heavily.

Meantime the hostess had dished up the joint of roast lamb, with its reassuring tail, on a large earthen platter. The hangman seated himself opposite Ordener and Spiagudry, between the two clergymen; and his wife, after putting upon the table a jug of sweetened beer, a piece of *rindebrod*,[1] and five wooden plates, sat down by the fire and busied herself in sharpening her husband's dull tools.

"There, reverend sir," said Orugix, laughing; "the sheep offers you a piece of lamb. And you, Sir Periwig, was it the wind that blew your hair over your face?"

"The wind, sir,— the storm —" stammered the trembling Spiagudry.

"Come, pluck up a spirit, old boy! You see that these reverend gentlemen and I are good fellows. Tell us who you are, and who your silent young friend is, and talk a bit. If your conversation is as amusing as your person, it must be funny indeed."

"Your worship jests," said the keeper, pursing his lips, showing his teeth and winking, to make himself look merry. "I am but a poor old man."

"Yes," interrupted the jovial hangman, "some old scientist, some old sorcerer."

"Oh, my lord and master, a scientist, but no sorcerer!"

"So much the worse; a sorcerer would complete our joyful

[1] Bark bread, eaten by the poorer classes in Norway.

Sanhedrim. Gentlemen and guests, let us drink to restore this old sage's speech, so that he may enliven us at supper; the health of the man we hanged to-day, brother preacher! Well, father monk, do you refuse my beer?"

The hermit had, indeed, drawn from under his gown a large gourd of clear water, from which he filled his glass.

"Zounds, hermit of Lynrass!" cried the hangman, "if you will not taste my beer, I will taste the water which you prefer to it."

"So be it," answered the hermit.

"First take off your glove, worthy brother," answered the hangman. "Water should always be poured with the bare hand."

The hermit shook his head, saying, "It is a vow."

"Well, then, pour," said the hangman.

Hardly had Orugix raised the glass to his lips when he set it down hastily, while the hermit drained his at a draught.

"By the Holy Grail! good hermit, what is that infernal stuff? I have not drank its like since the day that I came near drowning in my voyage from Copenhagen to Throndhjem. Truly, hermit, that is no water from Lynrass spring; it is salt water."

"Salt water," repeated Spiagudry, his terror increasing as he looked at the hermit's glove.

"Well, well!" said the hangman, turning toward him with a loud laugh; "so everything alarms you, old Absalom, — even to the drink of a holy monk who chooses to mortify his flesh!"

"Alas no, master! But salt water — There is but one man —"

"Come, come, you don't know what you are talking about, sir doctor; your distress must be caused by your bad conscience, or else you despise our company."

These words, uttered in a humorous tone, reminded Spiagudry that he must needs hide his fears. To mollify his much-dreaded host, he called his vast memory to his aid, and

summoned up all the presence of mind which was left to him.

"I despise you,— you, my lord and master! You whose presence in a province gives that province the *merum imperium!*[1] You, mighty hangman, the executioner of secular vengeance, the sword of justice, the shield of innocence! You, whom Aristotle in the sixth book and last chapter of his 'Politics' ranks with magistrates, and whose salary Paris de Puteo, in his treatise 'De Syndico,' fixes at five gold crowns, as this passage proves: *Quinque aureos manivolto!* You, sir, whose Cronstadt colleagues were ennobled when they had cut off three hundred heads,— you, whose terrible but most honorable functions are performed with pride in Franconia by the most recent bridegroom, in Reutlingen by the youngest of the city councillors, in Stedien by the last-made citizen! And do I not also know, good master, that your colleagues in France have the right of *havadium* upon every leper, upon pigs and upon cake on Epiphany eve? How could I fail to feel the deepest respect for you when the abbot of Saint Germain des Prés gives you a boar's head every year, on Saint Vincent's Day, and puts you at the head of his procession!"

Here the keeper's erudite flow of fancy was abruptly cut short by the hangman.

"Upon my word, this is the first I have heard of it. The learned abbot of whom you speak, my worthy friend, has hitherto defrauded me of all these fine privileges which you describe in such attractive fashion.— Strangers," continued Orugix, "aside from all this old fool's extravagant nonsense, it is quite true that I have missed my career. I am only the poor hangman of a poor province. Well, I certainly ought to have done better than Stillison Dickoy, the famous hangman of Moscow. Would you believe that I am the same man who was chosen twenty-four years ago to behead Schumacker?"

"Schumacker, Count of Griffenfeld!" exclaimed Ordener.

[1] Blood privilege, the right to have a hangman.

"Does that surprise you, Sir Silent? Yes, that selfsame Schumacker who, strange to say, would again fall into my hands should it please the king to recall his reprieve. Let us empty this jug, gentlemen, and I will tell you how it happens that after so brilliant a beginning I end my career so miserably.

"In 1676, I was assistant to Rhum Stuald, the royal hangman at Copenhagen. At the time of Count Griffenfeld's sentence, my master falling ill, I was, thanks to my powerful patrons, selected to act in his place. On June 5,— I shall never forget that day,— at five o'clock in the morning, assisted by the carpenter, I erected in the public square a huge gallows, which we hung with black, out of respect for the prisoner. At eight, the king's guards surrounded the scaffold, and the Schleswig Uhlans kept back the crowd that thronged the square. Who would not have been dazzled in my place? Erect, and sword in hand, I stood waiting on the platform. All eyes were upon me; at that moment I was the most important personage in the two kingdoms. My fortune, thought I, is made; for what could all these great lords, who have sworn the chancellor's ruin, do without me? I already regarded myself as the royal hangman of the town, by letters-patent; I had servants and privileges of every sort. Just listen! The clock on the fortress struck ten. The prisoner left his cell, crossed the square, and ascended the scaffold with a firm step and calm face. I wanted to tie his hair; he refused, and himself performed this last office. 'It's a long time,' he said smilingly to the prior of St. Andrew's, 'since I dressed my own hair.' I offered him the black bandage; he declined it scornfully, but without showing any contempt for me. 'My friend,' said he, 'this is perhaps the first time on record, that the space of a few feet ever held the two officers representing the extremes of the law,— the chancellor and the executioner!' Those words have remained graven on my memory. He also refused the black cushion which I would have given him for his knees, embraced the priest, and knelt, after declaring his innocence

in a loud voice. Then I broke his escutcheon with a single blow of my mace, crying aloud, as is the custom, 'This is not done without just cause!' This affront shook the count's firm bearing; he turned pale, but soon mastered himself and said, 'The king gave me my arms; the king can take them from me!' He placed his head on the block, turned his eyes toward the east, and I raised my sword in both hands. Now listen! At that instant a shout fell upon my ears,—'Pardon, in the king's name! Pardon for Schumacker!' I turned; I saw a royal aide-de-camp galloping toward the gallows waving a parchment. The count rose, with a look not of pleasure but of satisfaction. The parchment was handed to him. 'Good God!' cried he, 'imprisonment for life! Their mercy is more cruel than death.' He stepped, looking like a thief, from the scaffold which he had mounted so serenely. It was nothing to me. I had no idea that this man's salvation meant my ruin. After removing the scaffold, I returned to my master still full of hope, although slightly disappointed at losing the golden crown, my fee for removing a head. That was not all. Next day, I received an order to leave the city, and an appointment as executioner for the province of Trondhjem. A provincial hangman, and that in the most miserable province of Norway! Now you shall see, gentlemen, how small causes sometimes bring about great results. The count's enemies, by way of displaying their generosity, had done all in their power to keep back the pardon until the execution was over. It lacked but one minute; they blamed me for being so slow, as if it would have been decent to prevent an illustrious man from amusing himself for a few moments, before he breathed his last! As if a royal executioner beheading a lord high chancellor could act with no more dignity and sense of proportion than a country hangman turning off a Jew! Ill-will was added to this. I had a brother; indeed, I think I have one still. He had changed his name, and succeeded in finding employment in the house of the new chancellor, Count d'Ahlefeld. My presence in Copenhagen disturbed the

scoundrel. My brother despised me, because it might some time fall to my lot to hang him."

Here the fluent narrator stopped to give vent to his mirth; then he went on: —

"You see, my dear guests, that I made the best of it. The deuce take ambition! I ply my calling honestly. I sell my dead bodies, or rather Becky turns them into skeletons, which the Bergen anatomical museum buys. I laugh at everything, even at that poor woman who was a gypsy, and whom solitude has driven mad. My three heirs are growing up in the fear of the Devil and the gallows. My name is the terror of all the children in Throndhjem. The city council furnish me with a cart and red clothes. The Cursed Tower protects me from rain as well as the bishop's palace could do. Old priests, driven hither by a storm, preach to me; learned men fawn upon me. In fine, I am as happy as most people; I drink, eat, hang, and sleep."

The hangman did not close this long speech without frequent interludes of beer and noisy bursts of laughter.

"He kills, and he sleeps!" murmured the minister; "poor wretch!"

"What a lucky fellow the rascal is!" exclaimed the hermit.

"Yes, brother monk," said the hangman; "just as much of a rascal as you are, but assuredly much luckier. You see, the business would be a capital one if people did not seem to take pleasure in cutting down my profits. Would you believe it, some great wedding has just afforded the chaplain newly appointed to Throndhjem a pretext for asking the pardon of twelve criminals who really belonged to me?"

"Belonged to you!" cried the minister.

"Yes, to be sure, Father. Seven of them were sentenced to be whipped, two to be branded on the left cheek, and three to be hanged, which makes twelve in all. Yes, I shall lose twelve crowns and thirteen escalins if the pardon is granted. What do you think, strangers, of such a chaplain,

who disposes so easily of my property? That confounded priest's name is Athanasius Munder. Oh, if I could only get hold of him!"

The minister rose, and said in a quiet voice, with a calm manner, "My son, I am Athanasius Munder."

At these words Orugix's face became inflamed with fury; he started from his seat. Then his angry eye met the friendly gaze of the chaplain, and he sat down again slowly, in mute confusion.

There was a momentary silence. Ordener, who had risen from the table ready to defend the priest, was first to break it.

"Nychol Orugix," said he, "here are thirteen crowns to pay for the pardon of those prisoners."

"Alas!" interrupted the minister, "who knows whether I can obtain their pardon? I must first manage to get a word with the viceroy's son, for it all depends upon his marrying the chancellor's daughter."

"Sir chaplain," answered the young man in a firm voice, "your wish shall be granted. Even if Ordener Guldenlew never wears the marriage ring, the chains of your *protégés* shall be loosed."

"Young stranger, you can do nothing in the matter; but God hears, and will reward you!"

Meantime, Ordener's thirteen crowns had finished the work which the priest's mild gaze began. Nychol's anger being allayed, he recovered his good-humor.

"Come, reverend sir, you are a good man, worthy to serve in St. Hilary's chapel; I spoke more harshly than I intended. You do but follow your own path; it is not your fault if it crosses mine. But there is one man to whom I do bear a grudge, and that's the guardian of the dead at Throndhjem, — that old sorcerer, the keeper of the Spladgest. What's his name now,— Spliugry? Spadugry? Tell me, you old philosopher, who seem to be a perfect Babel of learning,— you who know everything, can't you help me to remember the name of that magician, your brother? You must have

met him sometimes of a Sabbath, riding through the air on a broomstick, eh?"

Certainly, if poor Benignus could have escaped at that moment upon some such aerial steed, the narrator of this story doubts not that he would most gladly have trusted his frail and terrified body to its tender mercies. Never before was his love of life so strong as now that he clearly perceived the extreme imminence of his danger. Everything that he saw frightened him,— the legends of the Cursed Tower, the wild eyes of the red woman, the voice, gloves, and beverage of the mysterious monk, the rash courage of his young companion, and especially the hangman,— the hangman, into whose abode he had fallen in his effort to escape from the charge of crime. He trembled so violently that he could scarcely move, particularly when the conversation turned upon himself, and he heard the dreadful Orugix's question. As he had no desire to imitate the heroism of the priest, his faltering tongue found great difficulty in framing a reply.

"Well!" repeated the hangman, "don't you know the name of the keeper of the Spladgest? Does your wig make you deaf?"

"Somewhat, sir; but," he finally stammered out, "I don't know his name, I swear I don't."

"He don't know?" said the hermit's terrible voice. "He does wrong to take oath to it. That man's name is Benignus Spiagudry."

"My name! my name! Great heavens!" exclaimed the affrighted old man.

The hangman burst out laughing.

"And who said that it was your name? We are talking of that dog of a keeper. In good sooth, this learned fellow is scared at nothing. How would it be if his ridiculous grimaces had a genuine cause? It would be fun to hang the old fool. So then, venerable doctor," added the hangman, whom Spiagudry's fears entertained, "you do not know this Benignus Spiagudry?"

"No master," said the keeper, somewhat reassured by his disguise; "I assure you I don't know him. And since he is so unfortunate as to displease you, I should be very sorry, master, indeed I should, if I did know the fellow."

"And you, hermit," said Orugix,—"you seem to know him?"

"Yes, truly," replied the hermit; "he is a tall, dried-up, bald old fellow —"

Spiagudry, justly alarmed at this minute description, hastily adjusted his wig.

"He has," added the hermit, "long hands like those of a thief who has not seen a traveller for a week, a bent back —"

Spiagudry sat up as straight as he could.

"Moreover, he might easily be taken for one of the corpses in his charge if he had not such sharp eyes."

Spiagudry clapped his hand to his plaster.

"Many thanks, Father," said the hangman; "I shall know the old Jew now, wherever I may run across him."

Spiagudry, who was an excellent Christian, indignant at this intolerable insult, could not help exclaiming, "Jew, master!"

Then he stopped short, trembling lest he had said too much.

"Well, Jew or Pagan, what does it matter which, if he have dealings with the Devil, as they say he has?"

"I should readily believe it," rejoined the hermit, with a sarcastic smile, not quite hidden by his cowl, "if he were not such a coward. But how could he covenant with Satan? He is as cowardly as he is wicked. When fear takes possession of him, he actually forgets his own identity."

The hermit spoke slowly, as if with intention, the very deliberation of his words lending them peculiar force.

"He forgets his own identity!" mentally repeated Spiagudry.

"It's a pity for a bad man to be a coward," said the hangman; "for he is not worth hating. We fight a serpent, but we can only crush a lizard."

Spiagudry ventured a few words in his own defence.

"But gentlemen, are you sure that the official of whom you speak is really what you say? Is his reputation so bad?"

"His reputation!" repeated the hermit; "he has the worst reputation of any man in the district!"

Benignus, in his disappointment, turned to the hangman.

"Master, what fault have you to find with him? For I do not doubt that your dislike is just."

"You are right, old man, not to doubt it. As his trade resembles mine, Spiagudry does all he can to injure me."

"Oh, master, never believe it! Or, if it be so, it is because he never saw you, as I have, surrounded by your good wife and lovely children, admitting strangers to the delights of your domestic circle. Had he enjoyed your kind hospitality as I have, sir, the unfortunate man could never be your enemy."

Spiagudry had scarcely ended this wily speech, when the tall woman, who had been silent until then, rose, and said in a sharp, stern voice, "The viper's tongue is never more venomous than when it is smeared with honey." Then she sat down again, and went on polishing her pincers,— a task whose hoarse, grating sound, filling up the spaces in the conversation, performed the office of the chorus in a Greek tragedy, at the expense of the ears of the four travellers.

"That woman is crazy indeed!" thought the keeper, unable otherwise to explain the ill effect of his flattery.

"Becky is right, my fair-haired sage," exclaimed the hangman. "I shall think you have a viper's tongue, if you defend that Spiagudry much longer."

"God forbid, master!" exclaimed the latter; "I would not defend him for the world."

"Very good. You do not know how far he carries his insolence. Would you believe that the impudent scamp is bold enough to dispute my right to the possession of Hans of Iceland?"

"Hans of Iceland!" exclaimed the hermit.

"Yes, to be sure. Do you know that famous knave?"

"Yes," said the hermit.

"Well, every thief belongs to the hangman, doesn't he? What does that infernal Spiagudry do? He asks to have a price set upon the head of Hans."

"He asks to have a price set upon the head of Hans?" interrupted the hermit.

"He had the audacity to do so, and that, simply that the body might fall to his share, and I might be defrauded of my property."

"What an outrage, Master Orugix, to dare to dispute your right to a thing which so plainly belongs to you!"

These words were accompanied by a malicious smile, which alarmed Spiagudry.

"The trick is all the worse, hermit, because I only need one good hanging, such as that of Hans would be, to remove me from my obscurity, and to make the fortune which I failed to make by beheading Schumacker."

"Indeed, Master Nychol?"

"Yes, brother monk, on the day that Hans is arrested, come and see me, and we will sacrifice a fat pig to my future greatness."

"Gladly; but who knows whether I shall be at liberty upon that day? Besides, you just now sent ambition to the Devil."

"Oh, why not, Father, when I see that to destroy my best founded hopes it only needs a Spiagudry, and a request to set a price upon a man's head?"

"Ah!" repeated the hermit, in a peculiar tone; "so Spiagudry asked that a price be set!"

That voice was to the wretched keeper what the toad's eye is to a bird.

"Gentlemen," he urged, "why judge rashly? It is not at all sure; it may be a false report."

"A false report!" cried Orugix; "the thing is but too certain. The petition of the city council, supported by the signature of the keeper of the Spladgest, is in Throndhjem

at this very moment. It only waits the decision of his excellency the governor-general."

The hangman was so well informed, that Spiagudry dared not continue his defence, he contented himself with swearing inwardly, for the hundredth time, at his youthful companion.

But what was his horror when he heard the hermit, who for some moments had seemed lost in thought, suddenly exclaim in bantering tones: "Master Nychol, what is the penalty for sacrilege?"

These words produced the same effect on Spiagudry as if his periwig and plaster had been torn off. He anxiously awaited the reply of Orugix, who stopped to empty his glass.

"That depends on the nature of the sacrilege," said the hangman.

"Suppose it was profaning the dead?"

Upon this the shivering Spiagudry expected every instant to hear his name issue from the lips of the unaccountable monk.

"Formerly," coolly remarked Orugix, "they buried the offender alive, with the body he had outraged."

"And now?"

"Now the punishment is milder."

"Is milder!" said Spiagudry, scarcely daring to breathe.

"Yes," rejoined the hangman, with the satisfied and indifferent air of an artist talking of his own art; "they brand him first, with a hot iron, with the letter S, on the calf of the leg."

"And then?" broke in the old keeper, upon whom it would have been difficult to inflict this part of the sentence.

"Then," said the executioner, "they merely hang him."

"Mercy!" said Spiagudry; "hang him!"

"Well, what's the matter with you? You look at me as the victim looks at the gallows."

"I am glad," said the hermit, "to see that people are growing more humane."

At this moment, the storm having ceased, the clear, intermittent sound of a horn was distinctly heard outside.

"Nychol," said his wife, "they are in search of some malefactor; that's the horn of the bowmen."

"The horn of the bowmen!" repeated each of the company, in different accents, but Spiagudry in tones of unmistakable terror.

They had scarcely uttered the words when there was a knock at the door.

XIII

Only a man, a sign, is needed; the elements of revolution are ready. Who will be the first? So soon as there is a fulcrum, everything will move.—BONAPARTE.

LOEVIG is a large town, situated on the north side of Throndhjem fjord, and sheltered by a low chain of bare hills, singularly diversified by various sorts of crops, like broad bits of mosaic resting upon the horizon. The appearance of the town is gloomy; the fishermen's cabins, made of twigs and reeds, the conical hut, constructed of earth and stones, in which the invalid miner spends the few days which his scanty savings allow him to devote to sunshine and rest, and the frail ruin which the chamois-hunter in his turn decks with a straw roof and walls hung with skins, line streets longer than the town itself, because they are narrow and crooked. In a square where now exist only the remains of a great tower, once stood the ancient fortress built by Horda the Fine Archer, lord of Loevig, and brother-in-arms of the pagan king Halfdan, occupied in 1698 by the mayor of the town, who would have been the best-lodged citizen in the city, if it had not been for the silvery stork who every summer perched on the tip of the sharp spire of the church, like the white pearl on the top of a mandarin's pointed cap.

On the morning of the same day that Ordener reached

Throndhjem, another personage, also incognito, landed at Loevig. His gilded litter, although without armorial bearings, his four tall lackeys, armed to the teeth, instantly became the topic of every conversation, and roused the curiosity of all. The landlord of the Golden Gull, a small tavern at which the great man alighted, himself assumed an air of mystery and answered every question with an "I don't know," which seemed to imply, "I know all, but you shall know nothing." The tall lackeys were as mute as fishes, and more obscure than the mouth of a mine.

The mayor shut himself up in his tower, waiting with great dignity for the stranger to make the first visit; but the inhabitants were soon surprised to see him call twice at the Golden Gull in vain, and at evening lie in wait for a bow from the stranger, as he sat at the half-open window. From this the gossips inferred that the great man had made his high rank known to the lord mayor. They were mistaken. A messenger sent by the stranger presented himself at the mayor's office to get his passport signed, and the mayor noticed upon the green seal two crossed hands supporting an ermine mantle, surmounted by a count's coronet upon a shield, from which depended the collars of the Orders of the Elephant and the Dannebrog. This was enough for the mayor, who was most desirous of obtaining from the chancellor the lord mayoralty of Throndhjem. But his advances were useless, for the great man would see no one.

The second day of the traveller's stay in Loevig was drawing to its close, when the landlord entered his room, saying with a low bow that the messenger expected by his Grace had arrived.

"Very well," said his Grace; "let him come up."

A moment later the messenger entered, carefully closed the door, then bowing to the ground before the stranger, who had half turned toward him, waited in respectful silence until he should be addressed.

"I expected you this morning," said the stranger; "what detained you?"

"The interests of your Grace, Count; have I another thought?"

"How is Elphega? How is Frederic?"

"They are well."

"Good! good!" broke in the master; "have you nothing more interesting to tell me? What is the news at Throndhjem?"

"Nothing, except that Baron Thorwick arrived there yesterday."

"Yes, I know that he wanted to consult that old Mecklenburger, Levin, about his marriage. Do you know the result of his interview with the governor?"

"To-day at noon, when I left, he had not yet seen the general."

"What! and he arrived last night! You surprise me, Musdœmon. And had he seen the countess?"

"Still less, sir."

"Then you saw him?"

"No, noble master; besides, I do not know him."

"And how, if no one has seen him, do you know that he is in Throndhjem?"

"Through his servant, who was at the governor's palace yesterday."

"But he,— did he go elsewhere?"

"His servant declares that as soon as he arrived, he set off for Munkholm, after first visiting the Spladgest."

The count's eye flashed fire.

"For Munkholm! For Schumacker's prison! Are you positive? I always suspected that honest Levin of being a traitor. For Munkholm! What can be the attraction there? Did he want to ask Schumacker's advice also? Did he —"

"Noble lord," interrupted Musdœmon, "it is by no means certain that he went there."

"What! Then why did you say so? Are you trifling with me?"

"Pardon me, your Grace! I merely repeated what the

baron's servant said. But Mr. Frederic, who was on duty yesterday at Munkholm, saw nothing of Baron Ordener."

"That's no proof! My son does not know the viceroy's son. Ordener may have entered the fortress in disguise."

"Yes, sir; but Mr. Frederic asserts that he saw no one."

The count grew calmer.

"That's a different matter. Did my son really say so?"

"He assured me of the fact three separate times; and Mr. Frederic's interests in this case are identical with your own."

This suggestion quite relieved the count.

"Ah!" said he, "I understand. The baron, on his arrival, must have wished to take a short sail on the fjord, and his servant fancied that he went to Munkholm. After all, why should he go there? I was foolish to take alarm. My son-in-law's lack of eagerness to see old Levin proves, on the contrary, that his affection for him is not so strong as I feared. You will hardly believe it, my dear Musdœmon," added the count, "but I actually imagined that Ordener was in love with Ethel Schumacker, and I constructed a romance and an intrigue out of this journey to Munkholm. But, thank God, Ordener is not such a fool as I am. By the way, my friend, how fares it with that young Danaë in Frederic's hands?"

Musdœmon had shared his master's fears regarding Ethel Schumacker, and had struggled against them without overcoming them quite so readily. However, charmed to see his master smile, he took care not to disturb his peace of mind, but rather sought to add to it, that he might increase that serene temper so necessary in the great for the well-being of their favorites.

"Noble Count, your son has failed with Schumacker's daughter; but it seems that another has been more fortunate."

The count interrupted him eagerly.

"Another! What other?"

"Oh, I don't know,— some peasant, serf, or vassal."

"Do you speak the truth?" cried the count, his stern, dark face beaming.

"Mr. Frederic declares that it is so, and he told the countess the same story."

The count rose and paced the room, rubbing his hands.

"Musdœmon, dear Musdœmon, but one more effort, and our end is gained. The young shoot is blasted. We have only to uproot the parent tree. Have you any other good news?"

"Dispolsen has been murdered."

The count's features brightened.

"Ah, you see that we advance from victory to victory. Have we his papers? Above all, have we that iron casket?"

"I regret to inform your Grace that the murder was not committed by our people. He was killed and robbed upon Urchtal Sands, and the deed is attributed to Hans of Iceland."

"Hans of Iceland!" repeated his master, his brow again clouding. "What! that famous brigand whom we meant to put in charge of our rebellion?"

"The same, noble Count; and I fear, from what I can gather, that it will be no easy task to find him. At any rate, I have secured a leader who will take his name, and can replace him if necessary,— a wild mountaineer, tall and strong as an oak, fierce and bold as a wolf in a wilderness of snow; this terrible giant must surely look much like the real Hans of Iceland."

"Then Hans of Iceland is tall?" inquired the count.

"That is the general opinion, your Grace."

"I cannot but admire, my dear Musdœmon, the art with which you lay your plans. When is the insurrection to break out?"

"Oh, very soon, your Grace; perhaps it is on foot even now. The royal protectorate has long been odious to the miners; they all grasped with joy at the idea of revolt. The movement will begin at Guldbrandsdal, extend to Sund-Moer, and reach Kongsberg. Two thousand miners can be raised in three days. The rebellion will be kindled in Schumacker's name; our emissaries use no other. The reserve forces in the

South and the garrisons at Throndhjem and Skongen can be called out, and you will be here on the spot most opportunely to put down the rebellion,— a fresh and significant service in the eyes of the king,— and to rid him of this Schumacker, the source of such anxiety to the throne. Upon these firm foundations will rise the structure to be crowned by the marriage of our noble lady Ulrica and Baron Thorwick."

A private interview between two scoundrels is never long, because all that is human in their souls quickly takes alarm at the infernal qualities revealed. When two depraved spirits mutually display their naked vices, each is disgusted by the other's iniquity. Crime itself revolts at crime; and two evil-doers conversing, with all the cynicism of intimacy, of their pleasures and their interests, are like a fearful mirror, each reflecting the other's monstrous features. Their own degradation mortifies them when seen in another, their own pride confounds them, their own nothingness alarms them; and they cannot fly from themselves or disavow their own portrait in their fellow-man; for each odious harmony, each frightful coincidence, each hideous parallel finds within them an untiring voice to denounce them in their ever-wearied ear. However secret may be their intercourse, it has always two intolerable witnesses,— God, whom they cannot see, and conscience, which they feel.

His confidential talks with Musdœmon distressed the count the more because the latter always unhesitatingly imputed to his master a good share of the crimes committed or about to be committed. Many courtiers think it wise to save great men from the appearance of wrong-doing; they assume the responsibility of evil, and often spare their patron's blushes by allowing him to feign resistance to advantageous crime. Musdœmon, by a refinement of skill, pursued the contrary course. He wished it to seem that he seldom advised, and always obeyed. He knew his master's soul as familiarly as that master knew his heart; therefore he never compromised himself without compromising the count. There was no head, save that of Schumacker, that the count would have been so

glad to see fall; Musdœmon knew this as well as if his master had told him, and his master knew that he knew it.

The count had learned all that he wished to learn; he was satisfied; he was now eager to dismiss Musdœmon.

"Musdœmon," said he, with a gracious smile, "you are the most faithful and most zealous of all my servants. All goes well, and I owe it to your devotion. I make you private secretary to the chancellor's office."

Musdœmon bowed low.

"Nor is that all," added the count; "I will ask for you, for the third time, the Order of the Dannebrog. But I still fear that your birth, your humble relations —"

Musdœmon blushed, turned pale, and hid his change of color by another bow.

"Come," said the count, offering him his hand to kiss, "come, Mr. Private Secretary, draw up your *placeat!* It may chance to find the king in gracious mood."

"Whether his Majesty grant my petition or not, your Grace's kindness overwhelms me."

"Make haste, my dear fellow, for I am anxious to be off. We must try to get some exact information about this Hans."

Musdœmon, with a third bow, opened the door.

"Ah!" said the count, "I forgot. In your new position as private secretary, you may write to the chancellor's office and order them to dismiss this mayor of Loevig, who compromises the dignity of his position in the eyes of the villagers by his servility to strangers whom he does not know."

XIV

The monk at midnight visiting the cross,
The knight taming his fiery steed,
The man who with dread sound of trumpet dies,
And he who dies with peaceful voice of prayer,
Are all the objects of Thy care, lavished alike
On every pious soul, whether he tonsure wear or helm.
Hymn to Saint Anselm.

"YES, master, we really owe a pilgrimage to Lynrass grotto. Who would have thought that the hermit, whom I cursed as if he had been the Devil, would prove to be our guardian angel, and that the sword which seemed to threaten our very lives would serve for a bridge to take us over the abyss?"

It was in these somewhat grotesquely figurative terms that Benignus Spiagudry poured into Ordener's ears his joy, his admiration, and his gratitude for the mysterious monk. As will readily be supposed, our two travellers had left the Cursed Tower; nay, when we again encounter them, they have even left the village of Vygla far behind them, and are painfully pursuing a steep path, interrupted by frequent pools or blocked by huge stones, which transient torrents caused by storms had washed down from the wet, sticky soil. Day had not yet dawned; but the bushes growing above the rocks on either side of the road stood out against the clear sky like dark silhouettes, and various objects, although still colorless, gradually assumed form in the dim, dull light which daybreak in the North filters through the chill fogs of early morning.

Ordener was silent, for he had yielded to that somnolent state sometimes permitted by the mechanical motion of walking. He had not slept since the night before, when he allowed himself to rest in a fishing-boat moored in Throndhjem harbor for the few hours intervening between his departure from the Spladgest and his arrival at Munkholm. Accord-

ingly, while his body moved toward Skongen his spirit had flown back to Throndhjem Fjord,— to that gloomy prison and those melancholy towers which contained the only being on earth to whom he attached any idea of hope and happiness.

Awake, thoughts of his Ethel filled his mind; asleep, her memory became a fanciful image which irradiated all his dreams. In this second life of sleep, where for a time the soul alone exists, and the physical being with all its material ills seems to disappear, he saw the beloved maiden, no more beautiful, no purer, than in reality, but happier, freer, more wholly his own. Only, upon the road to Skongen, the oblivion of his body, the torpor of his senses, could not be complete; for from time to time a bog, a stone, the branch of a tree, impeding his progress, recalled him suddenly from the ideal to the real. He would then raise his head, half open his drowsy eyes, and regret the fall from bright celestial wanderings to his painful earthly journey, where nothing could compensate for his lost illusions, save that he felt close to his heart the ringlet which was his until Ethel herself should be his own. Then this memory revived the charming dream-image, and he gently relapsed, not into slumber, but into a vague, persistent revery.

"Master," repeated Spiagudry, in a louder tone, which, combined with a blow from the trunk of a tree, aroused Ordener, "fear nothing. The bowmen turned to the right with the hermit when they left the tower, and we are far enough away from them to venture to speak. It is true that silence was most prudent until now."

"Indeed," said Ordener, yawning, "you push your prudence to extremes. It is at least three hours since we left the tower and the bowmen behind us."

"That is true, sir; but prudence never does any harm. Only think, if I had declared myself when the chief of that infernal troop asked for Benignus Spiagudry in a voice like that of Saturn calling for his new-born son that he might devour him! Suppose, even, I had not taken refuge in a

prudent silence at that awful moment, where should I be now, noble master?"

"Faith, old man, I fancy that at that moment nothing, not even pincers, could have drawn your name from you."

"Was I wrong, master? If I had spoken, the monk,—may Saint Hospitius, and Saint Usbald the Solitary, bless him!—the monk would have had no opportunity to ask the captain of the archers whether his men did not belong to the Munkholm regiment; a trifling question, merely asked in order to gain time. Did you notice, sir, after that stupid archer answered 'Yes,' with what a peculiar smile the monk requested him to follow him, saying that he knew the hiding-place of the fugitive, Benignus Spiagudry?"

Here the keeper paused for a moment, as if to make a fresh start; for he suddenly resumed, in a voice quivering with emotion: "A good priest, a worthy and upright anchorite, practising the principles of Christian virtue and evangelic charity; and I was alarmed at his mere outward appearance, forbidding enough, truly; but what a beautiful soul lies beneath! Did you notice too, noble master, that there was something peculiar in the tone with which he said to me, 'We shall meet again!' as he led away the archers? At any other time that tone would have alarmed me; but it is not the pious and excellent hermit's fault. Solitude undoubtedly gives that strange intonation; for I know, sir,"—here the voice of Benignus sank lower,—"I know another hermit, that dreadful fellow who— But no; out of respect for the venerable hermit of Lynrass I will not make so odious a comparison. Neither was there anything peculiar about his gloves; it is quite cold enough to wear them; and his salty beverage does not surprise me either. Catholic anchorites often follow singular examples; the very same thing, master, is alluded to in this line by the famous Urensius, the monk of Mount Caucasus:—

'Rivos despiciens, maris undam potat amaram.'

Why didn't I think of that verse while I was in that confounded ruin at Vygla? A little better memory would have spared me much needless alarm. To be sure, it is not easy, is it, sir, to collect your thoughts in such a den, seated at the table of a hangman,— a hangman, a creature given over to universal scorn and execration, who only differs from an assassin in the frequency and impunity of his murders; whose heart to all the atrocity of the most awful brigands unites the cowardice of which at least their daring crimes do not admit; a being who offers food and drink with the same hand that wields the instruments of torture, and crushes the bones of his miserable victims between the planks of the rack! Think of breathing the same air with a hangman! And the vilest beggar, if polluted by his loathsome touch, would cast aside with horror the last rags which protected his nakedness and his disease from the wintry blast! And the chancellor, after sealing his commission, flings the paper under the table in token of his malediction and his disgust! And in France, when the hangman dies in his turn, the provost's assistants would rather pay a fine of forty pounds than succeed him! And at Pesth, when Churchill was condemned to die, and they offered to pardon him if he would turn executioner, he preferred death to such a trade. Is it not still notorious, noble sir, that Turmeryn, bishop of Mäestricht, ordered a church to be purified because the hangman had entered it; and that Czarina Petrowna washed her face whenever she witnessed an execution? You know also that the kings of France, to honor warriors, permit them to be punished by their comrades, so that these brave men, even if they be criminals, may not be made infamous by contact with the hangman. And finally, which is decisive, in the 'Descent of Saint George into Hell,' by the learned Melasius Iturham, does not Charon give the robber, Robin Hood, precedence over the hangman, Philip Crass? Truly, master, if ever I attain to power, which God alone can foresee, I shall put down hangmen, and restore the ancient custom and the ancient tariff. For the murder of a prince a man shall

pay, as in 1150, fourteen hundred and forty double-crown pieces; for the murder of a count, fourteen hundred and forty plain crowns; for that of a baron, fourteen hundred and forty half-crowns; the killing of a mere noble shall be rated at fourteen hundred and forty escalins; and that of a citizen —"

"Don't I hear the tread of a horse coming toward us?" interrupted Ordener.

They looked back, and, as day had dawned during Spiagudry's long soliloquy, they could distinguish, a hundred paces behind them, a man dressed in black waving one hand to them, and with the other urging on one of those small dingy white ponies so often seen, either wild or domesticated, in the lower mountain ranges of Norway.

"For mercy's sake, master," said the timid keeper, "let us hasten; that black fellow looks to me just like an archer!"

"What, old man; we are two, and we should fly before a single man!"

"Alas! twenty sparrows fly before an owl. What glory is there in waiting for an officer of the law?"

"And who tells you that this is one?" rejoined Ordener, whose eyes were not blinded by fear. "Keep up your courage, my valiant guide; I recognize this traveller. Let us wait for him."

The keeper was forced to submit. A moment later the horseman came up with them, and Spiagudry ceased to tremble when he saw the grave, calm face of the chaplain, Athanasius Munder.

The latter greeted them with a smile, and reined in his steed, saying in an almost breathless voice, "My dear children, it is for your sake that I retrace my steps; and the Lord will surely not permit my absence, prolonged with a charitable intent, to injure those who sorely need my presence."

"Sir minister," answered Ordener, "we shall be happy to aid you in any way we can."

"On the contrary, it is I, noble young man, who desire

to serve you. Will you deign to tell me the object of your journey?"

"Reverend sir, I cannot."

"All I ask, my son, is that your refusal may proceed from inability, and not from distrust. If not, I am indeed unhappy! Unhappy is he whom the good man distrusts, even if he have seen him but once!"

The priest's modesty and unction touched Ordener deeply.

"All that I can tell you, Father, is that we are bound to the mountains of the North."

"So I thought, my son, and that is why I followed you. There are bands of roving hunters and miners in those mountains who might injure travellers."

"What then?"

"Well, I know that it is useless to dissuade a noble young man in search of adventure; but the esteem I feel for you inspires me with another plan for helping you. The unfortunate counterfeiter to whom I bore the last consolations of religion yesterday was a miner. Just before he died he gave me a paper inscribed with his name, saying that this passport would protect me from all danger if I ever had to travel among those mountains. Alas! what can it avail a poor priest who must live and die among prisoners, and who, moreover, *inter castra latronum*, should seek no other defence than patience and prayer, the only weapons of God! I did not decline the pass, because we should never distress by refusal the heart of one who in a few minutes more will have nothing to receive or to give on earth. The good God deigned to inspire me, for now I can offer you this parchment, that it may go with you in all the perils of your journey, and that the gift of the dying man may benefit the traveller."

Ordener accepted the old priest's gift with emotion.

"Sir Chaplain," said he, "God grant that your prayer may be heard! Thank you. But," he added, laying his hand on his sword, "I already carry my passport at my side."

"Young man," said the priest, "that poor parchment may perhaps protect you better than your steel blade. The gaze of a penitent man is more potent than the archangel's sword. Farewell! My prisoners await me. Pray sometimes for them and me."

"Holy priest," rejoined Ordener, with a smile, "I told you that your prisoners should be pardoned, and they shall be."

"Oh, do not speak with such assurance, my son! Do not tempt the Lord! No man can know what passes in the mind of another, and you cannot tell what the viceroy's son may decide to do. Perhaps, alas! he will never condescend to admit a humble chaplain to his presence. Farewell, my son; may your journey be blessed, and may you sometimes remember the poor priest and pray for his unhappy prisoners."

XV

Welcome, Hugo; tell me, did you ever see so terrible a storm? — MATURIN: *Bertram.*

IN a room communicating with the apartments of the Governor of Throndhjem, three of his Excellency's secretaries sat at a table loaded with parchments, papers, inkstands, and seals, a fourth chair, left vacant, showing that one of the scribes was late. They had been silently writing and thinking for some time, when one of them exclaimed: "Did you know, Wapherney, that the poor librarian, Foxtipp, is to be dismissed by the bishop, owing to the letter which you wrote recommending Dr. Anglyvius's petition to his favorable notice?"

"What nonsense are you talking, Richard?" hastily inquired the secretary to whom Richard had not spoken. "Wapherney could not have written in favor of Anglyvius, for the fellow's petition disgusted the general when I read it to him."

"So you told me," answered Wapherney; "but I found the word *tribuatur* [1] written on the petition in his Excellency's own hand."

"Indeed!" exclaimed the other.

"Yes, my dear fellow; and several other of his Excellency's decisions of which you told me, were also altered in marginal notes. For instance on the petition of the miners, the general wrote, *negetur*."

"What! I can't understand that; the general dreaded the turbulent spirit of those miners."

"Perhaps he wanted to frighten them into submission by his severity. What makes me think so is that Chaplain Munder's request for the pardon of twelve condemned prisoners is also refused."

The secretary whom Wapherney addressed, rose abruptly, saying, "Oh, come now, I can't believe that; the governor is too kind, and expressed too much compassion for those prisoners to —"

"Very well, Arthur," answered Wapherney; "read it for yourself."

Arthur took the petition and saw the fatal words.

"Really," said he, "I can scarcely credit my own eyes. I must present this to the governor again. What day did his Excellency mark these papers?"

"I believe it was some three days ago," replied Wapherney.

"That was," said Richard in a low voice, "the morning before Baron Ordener's brief appearance and mysteriously sudden disappearance."

"Stay!" quickly exclaimed Wapherney, before Arthur had time to answer; "if here is not another *tribuatur* on Benignus Spiagudry's ridiculous petition!"

Richard burst out laughing.

"Didn't that old keeper of corpses disappear in a strange way, too?"

"Yes," replied Arthur; "a body was found in his char-

[1] It is granted.

nel-house so mutilated that the officers of the law are in pursuit of him on a charge of sacrilege. But a little Lapp, who acted as his servant, and who was left alone at the Spladgest, thinks, as do most people, that the Devil carried him off for a sorcerer."

"Here," said Wapherney, laughing, "is a fellow who leaves a good reputation behind him!"

He had hardly had his laugh out when the fourth secretary came in.

"Upon my honor, Gustavus, you are very late this morning. Did you happen to get married yesterday?"

"Oh, no!" answered Wapherney; "he only took the longest way round, so that he might pass under the fair Rosalie's windows in his new cloak."

"Wapherney," said the new-comer, "I only wish that you were right. But the cause of my delay is not half so agreeable; and I doubt if my new cloak produced the slightest effect upon the persons whom I visited."

"Where have you been, then?" asked Arthur.

"To the Spladgest."

"Heaven is my witness," cried Wapherney, dropping his pen, "that we were just now speaking of that place! But though it may be talked of to pass away the time, I cannot conceive how anybody can enter it."

"And still less," said Richard, "how anybody can linger there. But what did you see, my dear Gustavus?"

"Yes," said Gustavus, "you are curious to hear about it, if not to see it; and it would serve you right if I refused to describe those horrors which you would shudder to behold."

The three secretaries crowded about Gustavus, who waited to be urged, although his desire to tell what he had seen was secretly no less lively than their curiosity to hear.

"Well, Wapherney, you can repeat my story to your little sister, who is so fond of frightful tales. I was pushed into the Spladgest by the crowd which thronged about it. The bodies of three soldiers and two bowmen from the Munkholm regiment had just been brought in, having been found yes-

terday some four miles away, in the ravine at the foot of Cascadthymore cliff. Some of the spectators declared that the poor fellows were the very ones sent out three days ago in the direction of Skongen to catch the runaway keeper of the Spladgest. If this be true, it is impossible to imagine how so many well-armed men could be murdered. The mutilation of the bodies seems to prove that they were flung from the top of the rocks. It made my hair stand on end to look at them."

"What, Gustavus! did you see them?" eagerly inquired Wapherney.

"They are still before my eyes."

"And has any one an idea as to the authors of the crime?"

"Some think that it may have been a band of miners, and assert that they heard the sound of the horn with which the soldiers call to one another, only yesterday among the mountains."

"Really!" said Arthur.

"Yes; but an old peasant demolished this supposition by remarking that there were neither mines nor miners in the neighborhood of Cascadthymore."

"Then who could it have been?"

"No one knows. If the bodies were not intact, it might be supposed the work of wild beasts, for their limbs are covered with long, deep scratches. The same is the case with the corpse of a white-bearded old man brought into the Spladgest day before yesterday, after that fearful storm which prevented you, my dear Leander Wapherney, from visiting your Hero across the fjord, on the Larsynn shore."

"All right, Gustavus," said Wapherney, laughing. "But who was this old man?"

"From his height, his long white beard, and a rosary still clasped tightly in his hands, although he had been stripped of everything else, he was recognized as a hermit of the neighborhood; I believe they called him the Monk of Lynrass. It is evident that this poor man was murdered also; but for what purpose? People are not slaughtered now for their

religious opinions, and the old hermit possessed nothing in the world but his serge gown and the good-will of all who knew him."

"And you say," observed Richard, "that his body was mangled, like those of the soldiers, as if by the claws of some savage animal?"

"Yes, my dear boy; and a fisherman declares that he noticed the same marks upon the body of an officer found murdered a few days since upon Urchtal Sands."

"That is strange," said Arthur.

"It is frightful," said Richard.

"Come," said Wapherney, "silence, and to work, for I think the general will be here soon. My dear Gustavus, I am curious to see those corpses. If you like, we will stop a moment at the Spladgest when we leave here this evening."

XVI

She with young unwakened senses,
Within her cabin on the Alpine field
Her simple homely life commences,
Her little world therein concealed.
And I, God's hate flung o'er me,
Had not enough, to thrust
The stubborn rocks before me
And strike them into dust!
She and her peace I yet must undermine:
Thou, Hell, hast claimed this sacrifice as thine!

GOETHE: *Faust, Bayard Taylor's Translation.*

IN 1675, twenty-four years previous to the date of this story, sooth to say, the whole village of Thoctree rejoiced and made merry over the marriage of sweet Lucy Pelryhn and that tall, handsome, upright youth, Carroll Stadt. They had long been lovers, and every one felt a warm interest in the happy pair upon the day which was to change so many restless hopes and eager longings into assured and quiet bliss. Born in the same village, reared in

the same fields, Carroll had often in their childhood slept in Lucy's lap when tired of play; Lucy had often, as a young girl, leaned on Carroll's arm as she returned from work. Lucy was the loveliest and most modest maiden in the land; Carroll the bravest and noblest lad in the village. They loved each other, and they could no more remember the day when their love began than they could recall the day when they were born.

But their marriage did not come, like their love, easily and as a matter of course. There were domestic interests to be consulted,— family feuds, relations, obstacles. They were parted for a whole year; and Carroll suffered sadly far from Lucy, and Lucy wept bitter tears far from Carroll, before the dawn of that happy day which united them, thereafter never to suffer or to weep apart.

It was by saving her from great danger that Carroll finally won his Lucy. He heard cries from the woods one day; they were uttered by his Lucy, surprised by a brigand dreaded by all the mountain folk, and on the point of carrying her off to his den. Carroll boldly attacked this monster in human shape, who gave vent to strange growls like those of a wild beast. Yes, he attacked the wretch, whom none before had ventured to resist. Love lent him a lion's strength. He rescued his beloved Lucy, restored her to her father, and her father gave her to her deliverer.

Now, the whole village made merry upon the day which united these two lovers. Lucy alone seemed depressed; and yet never had she gazed more tenderly at her dear Carroll. But her gaze was as sad as it was loving, and amid the universal rejoicing this was a subject for surprise. Every moment, as her husband's happiness seemed to increase, her eyes expressed more and more love and despair.

"Oh, my Lucy," said Carroll, when the sacred rites were over, "the coming of that robber, a curse to the entire country, was the greatest blessing for me!"

She shook her head, and made no answer.

Night came; they were left alone in their new abode, and

the sports and dancing on the village green went on more merrily than before, to celebrate the happiness of the bridal pair.

Next morning Carroll Stadt had vanished. A few words in his handwriting were brought to Lucy's father by a hunter from the mountains of Kiolen, who met him before daylight wandering along the shore of the fjord.

Old Will Pelryhn showed the paper to his pastor and the mayor, and nothing was left of last night's festival but Lucy's gloom and dull despair.

This mysterious catastrophe dismayed the entire village, and vain efforts were made to explain it. Prayers for Carroll's soul were said in the same church where but a few days before he himself sang hymns of thanksgiving for his happiness.

No one knew what kept Widow Stadt alive. At the end of nine months of solitary grief she brought into the world a son, and on the same day the village of Golyn was destroyed by the fall of the hanging cliff above it.

The birth of this son did not dissipate his mother's deep depression. Gill Stadt showed no signs of resemblance to Carroll. His fierce, angry infancy seemed to prophecy a still more ferocious manhood. Sometimes a little wild man — whom those mountaineers who saw him from a distance asserted to be the famous Hans of Iceland — entered the lonely hut of Carroll's widow, and the passers-by would then hear a woman's shrieks and what seemed the roar of a tiger.

The man would carry off young Gill, and months would elapse; then he would restore him to his mother, more sombre and more terrible than before.

Widow Stadt felt a mixture of horror and affection for the child. Sometimes she would clasp him in her maternal arms, as the only tie which still bound her to earth; again she would repulse him with terror, calling upon Carroll, her dear Carroll. No one in the world knew what agitated her soul.

Gill reached his twenty-third year; he saw Guth Stersen, and loved her madly.

Guth Stersen was rich, and he was poor; therefore he set off for Roeraas and turned miner, in order to make money. His mother never heard from him again.

One night she sat at the wheel, by which she earned her daily bread; the lamp burned low as she worked and waited in her cabin, beneath those walls which had grown old like herself, in solitude and grief, the silent witnesses of her mysterious wedding-night. She thought anxiously of her son, whose presence, ardently desired as it was, would recall much sorrow, perhaps bring more in its train.

The poor mother loved her son, ungrateful as he was. And how could she help loving him, she had suffered so much for him?

She rose and took from an antique wardrobe a crucifix thickly coated with dust. For an instant she looked at it imploringly; then suddenly casting it from her in horror, she cried: "I pray! How can I pray? Your prayers can only be addressed to hell, poor woman! You belong to hell, and to hell alone."

She had relapsed into her mournful revery, when there was a knock at the door.

This was a rare event with Widow Stadt. For many long years, in consequence of the strange incidents connected with her history, the whole village of Thoctree believed that she had dealings with evil spirits; no one therefore ever ventured near her hut,— strange superstitions of that age and ignorant region! She owed to her misfortunes the same reputation for witchcraft that the keeper of the Spladgest owed to his learning.

"What if it were my son, if it were Gill!" she exclaimed; and she rushed to the door.

Alas! it was not her son. It was a little monk clad in serge, his cowl covering all of his face but a black beard.

"Holy man," said the widow, "what would you have? You do not know the house to which you come."

"Yes, truly!" replied the hermit in a hoarse and all too familiar voice.

And tearing off his gloves, his black beard, and his cowl, he revealed a fierce countenance, a red beard, and a pair of hands armed with tremendous claws.

"Oh!" cried the widow, burying her head in her hands.

"Well," said the little man, "have you not in four-and-twenty years grown used to seeing the husband upon whom you must gaze through all eternity?"

"Through all eternity!" she repeated in a terrified whisper.

"Hark ye, Lucy Pelryhn, I bring you news of your son."

"My son! Where is he? Why does he not come?"

"He cannot."

"But you have news of him. I thank you. Alas! and can you bring me pleasure?"

"They are pleasant tidings indeed that I bring you," said the man in hollow tones; "for you are a weak woman, and I wonder that you could bring forth such a son. Rejoice and be glad. You feared that your son would follow in my footsteps; fear no longer."

"What!" cried the enraptured mother, "has my son, my beloved Gill, changed?"

The hermit watched her raptures with an ominous sneer.

"Oh, greatly changed!" said he.

"And why did he not fly to my arms? Where did you see him? What was he doing?"

"He was asleep."

In the excess of her joy, the widow did not notice the little man's ominous look, nor his horrible and scoffing manner.

"Why did you not wake him? Why did not you say to him, 'Gill, come to your mother?'"

"His sleep was too sound."

"Oh, when will he come? Tell me, I implore, if I shall see him soon."

The mock monk drew from beneath his gown a sort of cup of singular shape.

"There, widow," said he, "drink to your son's speedy return!"

The widow uttered a shriek of horror. It was a human skull. She waved it away in terror, and could not utter a word.

"No, no!" abruptly exclaimed the man, in an awful voice, "do not turn away your eyes, woman; look. You asked to see your son. Look, I say! for this is all that is left of him."

And by the red light of the lamp, he offered the dry and fleshless skull of her son to the mother's pale lips.

Too many waves of misfortune had passed over her soul for one misery the more to crush her. She gazed at the cruel monk with a fixed and meaningless stare.

"Dead!" she whispered; "dead! Then let me die."

"Die, if you choose! But remember, Lucy Pelryhn, Thoctree woods; remember the day when the demon, taking possession of your body, gave your soul to hell! I am that demon, Lucy, and you are my wife forever! Now, die if you will."

It is the belief in those superstitious regions that infernal spirits sometimes appear among men to lead lives of crime and calamity. In common with other noted criminals, Hans of Iceland enjoyed this fearful renown. It was also believed that a woman, who by seduction or by violence, became the prey of one of these monsters in human form, by that misfortune was doomed to be his companion in hell.

The events of which the hermit reminded the widow seemed to revive in her these thoughts.

"Alas!" she sobbed, "then I cannot escape from this wretched existence! And what have I done? for you know, my beloved Carroll, I am innocent. A young girl's arm is without strength to resist the arm of a demon."

She rambled on; her eyes were wild with delirium, and her incoherent words seemed born of the convulsive quiver of her lips.

"Yes, Carroll, since that day, though polluted, I am innocent; and the demon asks me if I remember that horrible

day! Carroll, I never deceived you; you came too late. I was his before I was yours, alas! Alas! and I must be forever punished. No, I can never rejoin you,— you for whom I weep. What would it avail me to die? I should follow this monster into a world as fearful as himself,— the world of the damned! And what have I done? Must my misfortunes in this life become my crimes in the next?"

The little monk bent a look of triumph and command upon her face.

"Ah!" she suddenly exclaimed, turning toward him; "ah, tell me, is not this some fearful dream induced by your presence? For you know but too well, alas! that since the day of my ruin, every night that I am visited by your fatal spirit is marked by foul apparitions, awful dreams, and frightful visions."

"Woman, woman, cease your raving; it is as true that you are wide awake as it is true that Gill is dead."

The memory of her past misfortunes had, as it were, blotted out all thought of her fresh grief; these words revived it.

"Oh, my son! my son!" she moaned; and the tones of her voice would have moved any but the wicked being who heard it. "No, he will return; he is not dead; I cannot believe that he is dead."

"Well, go ask him of Roeraas rocks, which crushed out his life; of Throndhjem Fjord, which swallowed up his body."

The widow fell upon her knees, crying convulsively, "God! great God!"

"Be silent, servant of hell!"

The wretched woman was silent. He added: "Do not doubt your son's death; he was punished for the sins of his father. He let his granite heart melt in the sunlight of a woman's eyes. I possessed you, but I never loved you. Your Carroll's misfortune was also his. My son and yours was deceived by his betrothed, by her for whom he died."

"Died!" she repeated, "died! Then it is really true? Oh, Gill, you were born of my misery; you were conceived

in terror and born in sorrow; your lips lacerated my breast; as a child, you never returned my caresses or embraces; you always shunned and repulsed your mother, your lonely and forsaken mother! You never tried to make me forget my past distress, save by causing me fresh injury. You deserted me for the demon author of your existence and of my widowhood. Never, in long years, Gill, never did you procure me one thrill of pleasure; and yet to-day your death, my son, seems to me the most insupportable of all my afflictions. Your memory to-day seems to me to be twined with comfort and rapture. Alas! alas!"

She could not go on; she covered her head with her coarse black woollen veil, and sobbed bitterly.

"Weak woman!" muttered the hermit; then he continued in a firm voice: "Control your grief; I laugh at mine. Listen, Lucy Pelryhn. While you still weep for your son, I have already begun to avenge him. It was for a soldier in the Monkholm regiment that his sweetheart betrayed him. The whole regiment shall perish by my hands. Look, Lucy Pelryhn!"

He had rolled up the sleeves of his gown, and showed the widow his misshapen arms stained with blood.

"Yes," he said with a fierce roar, "Gill's spirit shall delight to haunt Urchtal Sands and Cascadthymore ravine. Come, woman, do you not see this blood? Be comforted!"

Then all at once, as if struck by a sudden thought, he interrupted himself: "Widow, did you not receive an iron casket from me? What! I sent you gold and I bring you blood, and you still weep. Are you not human?"

The widow, absorbed in her despair, was silent.

"What!" said he, with a fierce laugh, "motionless and mute. You are no woman, then, Lucy Pelryhn!" and he shook her by the arm to rouse her. "Did not a messenger bring you an iron casket?"

The widow, lending him a brief attention, shook her head, and relapsed into her gloomy revery.

"Ah, the wretch!" cried the little man, "the miserable traitor! Spiagudry, that gold shall cost you dear!"

And stripping off his gown, he rushed from the hut with the growl of a hyena that scents a corpse.

XVII

My lord, I braid my hair; I braid it with salt tears because you leave me alone, and because you go hence into the hills.— *The Count's Lady* (*Old Romance*).

ETHEL, meantime, had already reckoned four long and weary days since she was left to wander alone in the dark garden of Schleswig tower; alone in the oratory, the witness of so many tears, the confidant of so many longings; alone in the long gallery, where once upon a time she had failed to hear the midnight bell. Her aged father sometimes accompanied her, but she was none the less alone, for the true companion of her life was absent.

Unfortunate young girl! What had that pure young soul done that it should be thus early given over to so much sorrow? Taken from the world, from honors, riches, youthful delights, and from the triumphs of beauty, she was still in the cradle when she was already in a prison cell; a captive with her captive father, she had grown up watching his decay; and to complete her misery, that she might not be ignorant of any form of bondage, love had sought her out in prison.

Even then, could she but have kept her Ordener at her side, would liberty have tempted her? Would she ever have known that a world existed from which she was cut off? Moreover, would not her world, her heaven, have been with her in that narrow keep, within those gloomy towers bristling with soldiers, toward which the passer-by would still have cast a pitying glance?

But, alas! for the second time her Ordener was absent; and instead of spending all too brief but ever recurring hours with him in holy caresses and chaste embraces, she passed days and nights in bewailing his absence, and praying that he might be shielded from danger. For a maiden has only her prayers and her tears.

Sometimes she longed for the wings of the free swallow which came to her to be fed through her prison bars. Sometimes her thought escaped upon the cloud which a swift breeze drove northward through the sky; then suddenly she would turn away her head and cover her eyes, as if she dreaded to see a gigantic brigand appear and begin the unequal contest upon one of the distant mountains whose blue peaks hung on the horizon like a stationary cloud.

Oh, it is cruel to live when we are parted from the object of our love! Few hearts have known this pang in all its extent, because few hearts have known love in all its depth. Then, in some sort a stranger to our ordinary existence, we create for ourselves a melancholy waste, a vast solitude, and for the absent one some terrible world of peril, of monsters, and of deceit; the various faculties which make up our being are changed into and lost in an infinite longing for the missing one; everything about us seems utterly indifferent to us. And yet we still breathe, and move, and act, but without our own volition. Like a wandering planet which has lost its sun, the body moves at random; the soul is elsewhere.

XVIII

On a vast buckler those relentless men
Terrified hell with fearful oaths;
And beside a black bull which they had slain,
All, bathing their hands in blood, swore to be revenged.
The Seven Chiefs before Thebes.

THE coast of Norway abounds in narrow bays, in creeks, coves, reefs, lagoons, and little headlands so numerous as to weary the traveller's memory and the topographer's patience. Formerly, if we are to credit popular tradition, every isthmus was haunted by some demon, each bay inhabited by some fairy, each promontory protected by some saint; superstition mingles all beliefs to create for itself imaginary terrors. Upon Kelvel strand, some miles to the north of Walderhog cave, there was but a single spot, they said, which was free from all jurisdiction either of infernal, intermediary, or celestial spirits. It was the glade lying along the shore, overhung by a cliff, on the top of which could still be seen vestiges of the manor of Ralph, or Rudolf, the Giant. This little wild meadow, bordered on the west by the sea, and closely shut in by rocks clad with heather, owed its exemption solely to the name of that ancient Norwegian lord, its first possessor. For what fairy, what devil, or what angel would venture to become master or guest of a domain once occupied and guarded by Ralph the Giant?

It is true that the mere name of the much dreaded Ralph sufficed to give an alarming character to a region wild in itself. But after all, a memory is not so much to be feared as a spirit; and no fisher, belated in rough weather, and mooring his bark in Ralph's creek, had ever seen the will-o'-the-wisp sport and dance upon the summit of a rock, or a fairy ride through the heather in her phosphorescent car drawn by glow-worms, or a saint ascend toward the moon, after his prayers were said.

And yet, if the angry waves and wind had allowed a wandering mariner to land in that hospitable harbor upon the night after the great storm, he might have been struck with superstitious fear at the sight of three men, who upon that same night sat around a huge fire, blazing in the middle of the meadow. Two of them wore the broad felt hat and loose trousers of royal miners. Their arms were bare to the shoulder, their feet were cased in fawn-colored leather boots; a red sash held their crooked swords and heavy pistols; each had a hunter's horn slung about his neck. One was old, the other was young; the old man's thick beard and the young man's long hair lent a wild and barbarous look to their faces, which were naturally hard and stern.

By his bearskin cap, his tanned leather jacket, the musket slung across his back, his short, tight-fitting drawers, his bare knees, his bark shoes, and the glittering axe in his hand, it was easy to guess that the companion of the two miners was a mountaineer from the north of Norway.

Certainly, any one who saw from afar these three weird figures, upon which the flames, fanned by the salt breeze, cast a red, flickering light, might well have been frightened, even had he no faith in spectres and demons; it would have been enough that he believed in thieves and was somewhat richer than the ordinary poet.

The three men constantly turned their heads toward the winding path through the wood which fringes Ralph's meadow, and judging by such of their words as were not carried off by the wind, they were expecting a fourth person.

"I say, Kennybol, do you know that we should not be allowed to wait so peacefully for this envoy from Count Griffenfeld, if we were in the neighboring meadow, Goblin Tulbvtilbet's meadow, or yonder in St. Cuthbert's bay?"

"Don't talk so loud, Jonas," replied the mountaineer; "blessed be Ralph the Giant, who protects us! Heaven save me from setting foot in Tulbytilbet's meadow! The other day I thought I was picking hawthorn there, and I gathered

mandrake instead, which began to bleed and shriek, and nearly drove me mad."

The young miner laughed.

"Nearly, Kennybol? For my part, I think that the mandrake's shriek produced its full effect upon your feeble brains."

"Feeble brains yourself!" said the vexed mountaineer; "just see, Jonas, he jests at mandrake. He laughs like a lunatic playing with a death's-head."

"Hum!" answered Jonas. "Let him go to Walderhog cave, where the heads of those whom Hans, the foul fiend of Iceland, has murdered, come back every night to dance about his bed of withered leaves, and gnash their teeth to lull him to sleep."

"That's so," said the mountaineer.

"But," rejoined the young man, "did not Mr. Hacket, for whom we are waiting, promise us that Hans of Iceland would take the lead in our rebellion?"

"He did," replied Kennybol; "and with the help of that demon we are sure to conquer the green jackets of Throndhjem and Copenhagen."

"So much the better!" cried the old miner. "But I'm not the man to stand guard beside him at night."

At this moment the rustle of dead leaves beneath the tread of a man drew the attention of the speakers; they turned, and the firelight gleamed on the new-comer's face.

"It is he! it is Mr. Hacket! Welcome, Mr. Hacket; you have kept us waiting. We have been here this three quarters of an hour."

"Mr. Hacket" was a short, fat man, dressed in black, and, his jovial countenance wore a forbidding expression.

"Well, friends," said he, "I was delayed by my ignorance of the road and the necessary precautions. I left Count Schumacker this morning; here are three purses of gold which he bade me give you."

The two old men flung themselves upon the gold with the eagerness common among the peasants of barren Norway.

The young miner declined the purse which Hacket offered him.

"Keep your gold, Sir Envoy; I should lie if I said that I had joined the revolt for your Count Schumacker's sake. I rebel to free the miners from the guardianship of the crown; I rebel that my mother's bed may have a blanket less ragged than the coast of our good country, Norway."

Far from seeming disconcerted, Mr. Hacket answered smilingly, "Then I will send this money to your poor mother, my dear Norbith, so that she may have two new blankets to shield her from the cold wind this winter."

The young man assented with a nod, and the envoy, like a skilful orator, made haste to add:—

"But be careful not to repeat what you just now inconsiderately said, that you are not taking up arms in behalf of Schumacker, Count Griffenfeld."

"But — but," muttered the two old men, "we know very well that the miners are oppressed, but we know nothing about this count, this prisoner of state."

"What!" sharply rejoined the envoy; "are you so ungrateful? You groan in your subterranean caves, deprived of light and air, robbed of all your property, slaves to the most onerous tutelage! Who came to your rescue? Who revived your failing courage? Who gave you gold and arms? Was it not my illustrious master, noble Count Griffenfeld, more of a slave and more unfortunate even than you? And now, loaded with his favors, would you refuse to use them to acquire his liberty with your own?"

"You are right," interrupted the young miner; "that would be an ill deed."

"Yes, Mr. Hacket," said the two old men, "we will fight for Count Schumacker."

"Courage, my friends! Rise in his name; bear your benefactor's name from one end of Norway to the other. Only listen; everything seconds your righteous enterprise; you are about to be freed from a formidable enemy, General Levin de Knud, governor of the province. The secret power of my

noble master, Count Griffenfeld, will soon procure his recall to Bergen. Come, tell me, Kennybol, Jonas, and you, my dear Norbith, are all your comrades ready?"

"My brethren of Guldbrandsdal," said Norbith, "only await my signal. To-morrow, if you wish —"

"To-morrow; so be it. The young miners under your leadership must be the first to raise the standard. And you, my brave Jonas?"

"Six hundred heroes from the Färöe Islands, who for three days have lived on chamois flesh and bear's fat in Bennallag forest, only ask a blast from the horn of their old captain, Jonas of Loevig town."

"Good! And you, Kennybol?"

"All those who carry an axe in the gorges of Kiölen, and climb the rocks with bare knees, are ready to join their brothers, the miners, when they need them."

"Enough. Tell your comrades that they need not doubt their victory," added the envoy, raising his voice; "for Hans of Iceland will be their captain."

"Is that certain?" asked all three at once, in a voice of mingled hope and fear.

The envoy answered: "I will meet you four days hence, at the same hour, with your united forces, in Apsyl-Corh mine, near Lake Miösen, on Blue Star plain. Hans of Iceland will be with me."

"We will be there," said the three leaders. "And may God not desert those whom the Devil aids!"

"Fear nothing from God," said Hacket, with a sneer. "Stay; you will find flags for your troops among the ruins of Crag. Do not forget the war-cry, 'Long live Schumacker! We will rescue Schumacker!' Now we must part; day will shortly break. But first, swear the most profound secrecy as to what has passed between us."

Without a word each of the three chiefs opened a vein in his left arm with the point of his sword; then, seizing the envoy's hand, each let a few drops of blood trickle into it.

"You have our blood," they said.

Then the young man exclaimed: "May all my blood flow forth like that which I now shed; may a malicious spirit destroy my plans, as the hurricane does a straw; may my arm be of lead to avenge an insult; may bats dwell in my tomb; may I, still living, be haunted by the dead, and dead, be profaned by the living; may my eyes melt with tears like those of a woman, if ever I speak of what has occurred at this time in Ralph the Giant's meadow. And may the blessed saints deign to hear this, my prayer!"

"Amen!" repeated the two old men.

Then they parted, and nothing was left in the meadow but the smouldering fire, whose expiring embers burned up at intervals, and gleamed upon the summit of Ralph the Giant's ruined and deserted towers.

XIX

Theodore. Tristam, let us be gone.
Tristam. This is a strange disgrace.
Theodore. Did any one see us?
Tristam. I know not, but I fear they did.
LOPE DA VEGA: *The Gardener's Dog.*

BENIGNUS SPIAGUDRY found it hard to guess the motives which led a youth of fine appearance, and apparently likely to live for many long years, to become the voluntary antagonist of the much-dreaded Hans of Iceland. He had frequently and with much ingenuity broached the question since they started on their travels; but the young adventurer preserved a stubborn silence as to the cause of his journey. Nor was the poor fellow any more successful in satisfying his curiosity concerning various other details as to his strange comrade. Once he ventured to ask a question about his young master's family and name. "Call me Ordener," was the reply; and this very unsatisfactory answer was given in a tone which forbade further question. He

was forced to submit; every one has his secrets, and good Spiagudry himself carefully concealed in his wallet, under his cloak, a certain mysterious casket, any inquiry as to which he would certainly have considered very disagreeable and greatly out of place.

Four days had passed since they left Throndhjem, but they had made little progress, owing to the bad state of the roads after the storm, and the multiplicity of cross-cuts and roundabout routes which the runaway keeper thought it prudent to take in order to avoid too thickly settled regions. Leaving Skongen on their right, toward evening of the fourth day they reached the shores of Lake Sparbo.

The vast stretch of water reflecting the last gleams of daylight and the first stars of coming night set in a frame of tall cliffs, black firs, and lofty oaks, presented a gloomy but magnificent picture. The sight of a lake at evening sometimes produces, at a certain distance, a peculiar optical illusion; it seems as if a vast abyss, cleaving the earth from side to side, revealed the heavens beneath our feet.

Ordener paused to contemplate the old Druidical forests, which cover the steep shores of the lake as with a garment, and the chalky huts of Sparbo, scattered over the slope like a stray flock of white goats. He listened to the distant clink of the forges,[1] mingled with the dull roar of the weird forests, the intermittent cry of wild birds, and the solemn music of the waves. To the north a huge granite bowlder, still gilded by the rays of the sun, rose majestically above the little village of Oëlmœ, its summit bending beneath a mass of ruined towers, as if the giant were weary of his load.

When the soul is sad, it delights in melancholy scenes; it adds to them its own gloom. Let an unhappy man be thrown among wild, high mountains beside some black lake in the heart of a dark forest, at the close of day, and he will see this solemn scene through a funereal veil; he will not feel that the sun is setting, but that it is dying.

[1] The waters of Lake Sparbo are greatly used for tempering steel.

Ordener lingered, motionless and mute, until his companion exclaimed: "Capital, sir! You do well to ponder thus beside the most miasma-laden lake in Norway."

This remark and the gesture which accompanied it, would have brought a smile to the lips of any but a lover parted from his mistress perhaps never again to meet her. The learned keeper added:—

"And yet I must rouse you from your meditations to remind you that day is drawing to a close, and we must make haste if we would reach Oëlmœ village before twilight overtakes us."

The observation was correct. Ordener resumed his journey, and Spiagudry followed him, continuing his unheeded reflections upon the botanic and physiologic phenomena which Lake Sparbo affords the naturalist.

"Mr. Ordener," said he, "if you will listen to your devoted guide, you will give up your fatal enterprise; yes, sir, and you will take up your abode upon the shores of this most curious lake, where we can devote ourselves to all sorts of learned research; for instance, to the study of the *stella canora palustris*,— a singular plant, which many scholars consider to be fabulous, but which Bishop Arngrimmsson asserts that he both saw and heard on the shores of Lake Sparbo. Added to this, we shall have the satisfaction of feeling that we dwell upon soil which contains more gypsum than any other in Europe, and where the hired assassins of Throndhjem are least likely to find their way. Doesn't it attract you, young master? Come, renounce your senseless journey; for, not to offend you, your scheme is dangerous, without being profitable,— *periculum sine pecunia;* that is to say, senseless, and conceived at a moment when you might better have been thinking of other things."

Ordener, who paid no attention to the poor man's words, merely kept up the conversation by those occasional meaningless monosyllables which great talkers are ready to accept in lieu of answers. Thus they reached Oëlmœ village, where they found an unusual bustle and stir.

The inhabitants — hunters, fishers, and blacksmiths — had left their houses, and hastily collected about a central mound occupied by a group of men, one of whom blew a horn and waved a small black-and-white banner over his head.

"Probably some quack doctor," said Spiagudry,—"*ambubaiarum collegia, pharmacopolæ;* some scamp who turns gold into lead and wounds into sores. Let us see. What invention of the Evil One will he sell these poor rustics? It would be bad enough if these impostors confined themselves to kings, if they all imitated Borch the Dane and Borri of Milan, those alchemists who so completely duped our Frederic III.;[1] but they are just as greedy for the peasant's mite as for the prince's million."

Spiagudry was mistaken. As they approached the mound they recognized by his black gown and round, pointed cap, the mayor, surrounded by a number of bowmen. The man blowing the horn was the town crier.

The fugitive keeper, somewhat disturbed, muttered: "Truly, Mr. Ordener, I did not expect to stumble upon the mayor when I came into this hamlet. Great Saint Hospitius, protect us! What does he say?"

His uncertainty was of brief duration, for the crier's shrill voice was quickly raised, and religiously heeded by the little group of villagers.

"In the name of his Majesty and by order of his Excellency, General Levin de Knud, governor, the lord mayor of Throndhjem notifies the inhabitants of all cities, towns, and villages in the province, that a reward of one thousand crowns is offered for the head of Hans, a native of Klipstadur, in Iceland, a murderer and incendiary."

[1] Frederic III. was the victim of Borch, or Borrich, a Danish chemist, and more especially of Borri, a Milanese quack, who declared himself to be the favorite of the Archangel Michael. This impostor, after startling Strasburg and Amsterdam with his pretended miracles, increased the sphere of his ambition and the boldness of his lies; having deceived the people, he ventured to deceive kings. He began with Queen Christina at Hamburg, and ended with King Frederic at Copenhagen.

A vague murmur ran through the crowd. The crier continued:—

"A reward of four crowns is offered for the head of Benignus Spiagudry, ex-keeper of the Spladgest at Throndhjem, accused of necromancy and sacrilege. This proclamation shall be published throughout the province by the mayors of all cities, towns, and villages, who will see that it is carried out."

The mayor took the proclamation from the crier's hands, and added in a lugubrious and solemn voice:—

"The life of these men is offered to whosoever will take it."

The reader will readily believe that this reading was not heard unmoved by our poor, unfortunate Spiagudry. No doubt, the unusual signs of terror which he showed would have roused the attention of the bystanders, had it not just then been wholly absorbed by the first clause of the proclamation.

"A reward for the head of Hans!" cried an old fisherman, who had hastened to the spot, trailing his wet nets behind him. "They might as well, by Saint Usuph, set a price upon the head of Beelzebub!"

"To keep up a proper balance between Hans and Beelzebub," said a hunter, recognizable by his chamois-skin jerkin, "they should only offer fifteen hundred crowns for the head and horns of the latter fiend."

"Glory be to the holy mother of God!" cried an old woman, her bald head shaking as she twirled her distaff. "I only wish I might see the head of that Hans, so that I might make sure if his eyes are really live coals, as they say."

"Yes, to be sure," replied another old woman; "it was just by looking at it that he set Throndhjem cathedral on fire. Now I should like to see the monster whole, with his serpent's tail, cloven foot, and broad wings like a bat."

"Who told you such nonsense, good mother?" broke in the hunter, with a self-satisfied air. "I've seen this Hans

of Iceland with my own eyes in the gorges of Medsyhath; he is a man like ourselves, only he is as tall as a forty-year-old poplar."

"Indeed!" said a voice from the crowd, with singular emphasis.

This voice, which made Spiagudry shudder, proceeded from a short man whose face was hidden by the broad felt hat of a miner, his body wrapped in rush matting and seal-skin.

"Faith!" cried, with a coarse laugh, a smith who wore his heavy hammer slung across his shoulder, "they may offer one thousand or ten thousand crowns for his head, and he may be four or forty feet tall, but I'll not offer to go in search of him."

"Nor I," said the fisherman.

"Nor I; nor I," repeated every voice.

"And yet any one who may feel tempted," rejoined the little man, "will find Hans of Iceland to-morrow at the ruins of Arbar, near Lake Miösen; the day after that at Walderhog cave."

"Are you sure, my good man?"

This question was asked at one and the same time by Ordener, who listened to this scene with an interest easily understood by any one but Spiagudry, and by another short and tolerably stout man, dressed in black, with a merry countenance, who had issued from the only inn which the village contained, at the first sound of the crier's horn.

The little man with the broad-brimmed hat seemed to be studying them both for a moment, and then answered in hollow tones: "Yes."

"And how can you be so certain?" asked Ordener.

"I know where Hans of Iceland is, just as well as I know where Benignus Spiagudry is; neither of them is far off at this instant."

All the poor keeper's terrors were revived, and he scarcely dared look at the mysterious little man. Fancying that his

French periwig had failed to disguise him, he began to pluck at Ordener's cloak and to whisper: "Master, sir, in Heaven's name, have mercy! have pity! let us be off! let us leave this accursed suburb of hell!"

Ordener, although equally surprised, carefully examined the little man, who, turning his back to the light, seemed anxious to conceal his face.

"I've seen that Benignus Spiagudry," cried the fisherman, "at Throndhjem Spladgest. He's a tall fellow. They offer four crowns for him."

The hunter burst out laughing.

"Four crowns! I shan't go a-hunting for him. I can get more for the skin of a blue fox."

This comparison, which at any other time would have greatly offended the learned keeper, now comforted him. Still, he was about to address another prayer to Ordener to persuade him to continue his journey, when the latter, having learned all that he wished to know, forestalled him by making his way out of the crowd, which was beginning to disperse.

Although when they entered Oëlmœ village they had intended passing the night there, they quitted it, as if by common consent, without even alluding to the motive for their abrupt departure. Ordener was moved by the hope of a more speedy meeting with the brigand, Spiagudry by a desire to get away from the archers as speedily as might be.

Ordener was in too serious a mood to laugh at his comrade's misadventures. He broke the silence in kindly tones.

"Old man, what is the name of the ruin where Hans is to be found to-morrow, according to that little man who seemed to know everything?"

"I don't know; I don't quite catch the name, noble master," replied Spiagudry, who uttered no falsehood in so saying.

"Then," continued the young man, "I must make up my mind not to meet him until the day after to-morrow at Walderhog cave."

"Walderhog cave, sir! Indeed, that is Hans of Iceland's favorite haunt."

"Let us take that road," said Ordener.

"We must turn to the left, behind Oëlmœ cliff. It will take us at least two days to get to Walderhog cave."

"Do you know, old man," cautiously observed Ordener, "who that odd fellow was, who seemed to be so well acquainted with you?"

This question again awakened Spiagudry's fears, which had been lulled to sleep as the village of Oëlmœ faded in the distance.

"No, truly, sir," he answered, in trembling accents. "But he had a very strange voice."

Ordener tried to encourage him.

"Fear nothing, old man; serve me well, and I will protect you. If I return victorious over Hans, I promise you not only a pardon, but I will also give you the thousand crowns reward offered by the officers of the law."

Honest Benignus dearly loved his life, but he also loved gold. Ordener's promises sounded like magic in his ears; they not only banished all his terrors, but they excited in him a kind of garrulous mirth, which found vent in lengthy discourses, queer gestures, and learned quotations.

"Mr. Ordener," said he, "if I should ever have occasion to discuss the subject with Over-Bilseuth, otherwise called 'the Babbler,' nothing shall prevent me from maintaining that you are a wise and honorable young man. What more worthy and more glorious, in fact, *quid cithara, tuba, vel campana dignius,* than nobly to risk your life to free your country from a monster, a brigand, a demon, in whom all demons, brigands, and monsters seem to be combined? Nobody need tell me that you are moved by mercenary motives. Noble Lord Ordener yields the price of his conflict to the companion of his journey, to the old man who only guided him within a mile of Walderhog cave; for I am sure, young master, that you will allow me to await the result of

your illustrious enterprise at the village of Surb, situated in the forest within a mile of Walderhog, will you not? And when your glorious victory is made known, sir, all Norway will thrill with joy like that of Vermund the Refugee, when from the summit of this same Oëlmœ cliff, which we just now passed, he saw the great fire kindled by his brother Halfdan on Munkholm tower in token of his deliverance."

At these words Ordener interrupted him eagerly.

"What! is Munkholm tower visible from the top of this rock?"

"Yes, sir; twelve miles to the south, between the mountains which our fathers called Frigga's Footstools. At this hour you should be able to see the light in the tower distinctly."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Ordener, fired by the idea of another glimpse of the seat of all his happiness. "Old man, of course there is a path leading to the top of the rock, is there not?"

"Yes, to be sure; a path which begins in the wood that lies just before us, and rises by a gentle slope to the bare crown of the cliff, whence it is continued by steps cut in the rock by Vermund's companions, as far as the castle, where it ends. Those are the ruins which you see in the moonlight."

"Well, old man, you shall show me the path; we will spend the night in those ruins,— in those ruins from which Munkholm tower is visible."

"Can you really mean it, sir?' asked Benignus. "The fatigues of the day —"

"Old man, I will support your steps; my footing was never more secure."

"Sir," the brambles that block path, which has long been deserted, the fallen stones, the darkness —"

"I will take the lead."

"There may be some savage beast, some unclean animal, some hideous monster —"

"I did not undertake this journey to avoid monsters."

The idea of halting so near Oëlmœ was very unpleasant to Spiagudry; the thought of seeing Munkholm light and possibly the light in Ethel's window, enraptured and transported Ordener.

"Young master," urged Spiagudry, "give up this scheme; take my advice. I have a presentiment that it will bring us bad luck."

This plea was as nothing the face of Ordener's longing.

"Come," said he, impatiently, "you must remember that you agreed to serve me faithfully. I insist upon your showing me the path; where is it?"

"We shall come across it directly," said the keeper, forced to obey.

In fact, they soon saw the path. They entered it; but Spiagudry observed, with surprise mixed with fright, that the tall grass was broken and trampled and that Vermund the Refugee's old footpath seemed to have been recently trodden.

XX

Leonardo. The king requires your presence.
Henrique. How so?

LOPE DA VEGA: *La Fuerza Lastinosa.*

GENERAL LEVIN DE KNUD sat at his desk, which was covered with papers and open letters, apparently lost in thought. A secretary stood before him awaiting his orders. The general now struck the rich carpet beneath his feet with his spurs, and now absently toyed with the decoration of the Elephant, hanging about his neck from the collar of the order. Occasionally he opened his lips as if to speak, then stopped, rubbed his head, and cast another glance at the unsealed despatches littering the table.

"How the devil!" he cried at last.

This conclusive exclamation was followed by a brief silence.

"Who would ever have imagined," he resumed, "that those devilish miners would have gone so far? Of course they were secretly egged on to this revolt; but do you know, Wapherney, the thing looks serious? Do you know that five or six hundred scoundrels from the Färöe Islands, headed by a certain old thief named Jonas, have already quitted the mines; that a young fanatic called Norbith has also taken command of the Guldbrandsdal malcontents; that all the hot-heads in Sund-Moer, Hubfallo, and Kongsberg, who were only waiting the signal, may have risen already? Do you know that the mountaineers have joined the movement, and that they are headed by one of the boldest foxes of Kiölen, old Kennybol? And finally, do you know that according to popular report in northern Throndhjem, if we are to believe the lord mayor, who has written me, that notorious criminal, upon whose head we have set a price, the much-dreaded Hans, has taken chief command of the insurrection? What do you say to all this, my dear Wapherney? Ahem!"

"Your Excellency," said Wapherney, "knows what measures —"

"There is still another circumstance connected with this lamentable affair which I cannot explain; that is, how our prisoner Schumacker can be the author of the revolt, as they claim.

"This seems to surprise no one, but it surprises me more than anything else. It is hard to believe that a man whose company my faithful Ordener loves can be a traitor; and yet it is asserted that the miners have risen in his name, — his name is their watch-word. They even give him the titles of which the king deprived him. All this seems certain; but how does it happen that Countess d'Ahlefeld knew all these details a week ago, at a time when the first real symptoms of trouble had scarcely begun to appear in the

mines? It is strange! No matter, I must provide for every emergency. Give me my seal, Wapherney."

The general wrote three letters, sealed them, and handed them to his secretary.

"See that this message is sent to Baron Vœthaün, colonel of musketeers, now garrisoned at Munkholm, so that his regiment may march at once to the seat of the revolt; this to the officer in command at Munkholm, an order to guard the ex-chancellor more closely than ever. I must see and question this Schumacker myself. Then despatch this letter to Skongen, to Major Wolhm, who is in command there, directing him to send forward a portion of the garrison to the centre of rebellion. Go, Wapherney, and see that these orders are executed at once."

The secretary went out, leaving the governor plunged in meditation.

"All this is very alarming," thought he. "These miners rebelling in one place, this chancellor intriguing in another, that crazy Ordener — nobody knows where! He may be travelling in the very midst of all these rioters, leaving Schumacker here under my protection to conspire against the State, and his daughter, for whose safety I have been kind enough to remove the company of soldiers to which that Frederic d'Ahlefeld belongs, whom Ordener accuses of — Why, it seems to me that this very company might easily stop the advance columns of the insurgents; it is very well situated for that. Wahlstrom, where it is stationed, is near Lake Miösen and Arbar ruin. That is one of the places of which the rebels will be sure to take possession.

At this point in his revery, the general was interrupted by the sound of the opening door.

"Well, what do you want, Gustavus?"

"General, a messenger asks to speak for a moment with your Excellency."

"Well, what is it now? What fresh disaster! Let the messenger come in."

The messenger entered, and handed a packet to the governor saying, "From his highness the viceroy, your Excellency."

The general hurriedly tore open the despatch.

"By Saint George!" he cried, with a start of surprise, "I believe that they have all gone mad! If here is not the viceroy requesting me to proceed to Bergen. He says it is on urgent business, by order of the king. A fine time this to transact urgent business! 'The lord chancellor now travelling in the province of Throndhjem, will take your place during your absence.' Here's a substitute in whom I have no confidence! 'The bishop will assist him —' Really, these are excellent governors that Frederic chooses for a country in a state of revolt,— two gentlemen of the cloth, a chancellor, and a bishop! Well, no matter, the invitation is express; it is the order of the king. Needs must obey; but before I go I must see Schumacker and question him. I am sure that there is a plot to involve me in a network of intrigue; but I have one unerring compass,— my conscience."

XXI

The voice of thy slain brother's blood cries out,
Even from the ground, unto the Lord!

Cain: A Mystery.

"YES, Count; it was this very day, in Arbar ruin, that we were told he might be found. Countless circumstances lead me to believe in the truth of this valuable information which I accidentally picked up yesterday, as I told you, at Oëlmœ village."

"Are we far from this Arbar ruin?"

"It is close by Lake Miösen. The guide assures me that we shall be there before noon."

These words were spoken by two horsemen muffled in

brown cloaks, who early one morning were pursuing one of the many narrow, winding paths which run in every direction through the forest lying between Lakes Miösen and Sparbo.

A mountain guide, provided with a hunting-horn and an axe, led the way upon his little gray pony, and behind the travellers rode four men armed to the teeth, toward whom these two persons occasionally turned as if afraid of being overheard.

"If that Iceland thief is really lurking in Arbar ruin," said one rider, whose steed kept a respectful distance behind the other, "it is a great point gained; for the difficulty hitherto has been to find this mysterious being."

"Do you think so, Musdœmon? And suppose he declines our offers?"

"Impossible, your Grace! What brigand could resist gold and a free pardon?"

"But you know that this is no common scoundrel. Do not judge him by yourself. If he should refuse, how can you keep your promise of night before last to the three leaders of the insurrection?"

"Well, noble Count, in that case, which I regard as impossible, if we are lucky enough to find our man, has your Grace forgotten that a false Hans of Iceland awaits me two days hence at the hour and place appointed for meeting the three chiefs, at Blue Star, a place, moreover, conveniently near Arbar ruin?"

"You are right, my dear Musdœmon, as usual," said the count; and each resumed his own particular line of thought.

Musdœmon, whose interest it was to keep his master in good humor, for the purpose of diverting him, asked the guide a question.

"My good man, what is that ruined stone across yonder, behind those young oaks?"

The guide, a man with fixed stare and stupid mien, turned

his head and shook it several times, as he said: "Oh, master, that is the oldest gallows in Norway; holy king Olaf had it built for a judge who made a compact with a robber."

Musdœmon saw by his patron's face that the guide's artless words had produced an effect quite contrary to that which he hoped.

"It is a curious story," the guide added; "good Mother Osia told it to me. The robber was ordered to hang the judge."

The poor guide, in his simplicity, did not suppose that the incident with which he meant to entertain his employers was almost an insult to them. Musdœmon stopped him.

"That will do," said he; "we have heard the story before."

"Insolent fellow!" muttered the count, "he has heard the story before. Ah, Musdœmon, you shall pay for your impudence yet."

"Did your Grace speak to me?" obsequiously asked Musdœmon.

"I was thinking how I could obtain the Order of the Dannebrog for you. The marriage of my daughter Ulrica and Baron Ordener would be an excellent opportunity."

Musdœmon was profuse in protestations and thanks.

"By the way," added his Grace, "let us talk business. Do you suppose that the temporary recall which we sent him has reached the Mecklenburger?"

The reader may remember that the count was in the habit of thus designating General Levin de Knud, who was indeed a native of Mecklenburg.

"Let us talk business!" thought the injured Musdœmon; "it seems that my affairs are not 'business.' Count," he replied aloud, "I think that the viceroy's messenger must be in Throndhjem by this time, and therefore General Levin must be getting ready to start."

The count assumed a kindly tone.

"That recall, my dear fellow, was one of your master-

strokes,— one of your best planned and most skilfully executed intrigues."

"The credit belongs as much to your Grace as to me," replied Musdœmon, careful, as we have already remarked, to mix the count in all his machinations.

The master understood this secret desire of his confidant, but chose to seem unconscious of it.

He smiled.

"My dear private secretary, you are always modest; but nothing can make me depreciate your most eminent services. Elphega's presence and the Mecklenburger's absence assure my triumph in Throndhjem. I am now at the head of the province; and if Hans of Iceland accepts the command of the rebels, which I intend to offer him in person, to me will fall, in the eyes of the king, the glory of putting down this distressing insurrection and capturing this terrible brigand."

They were chatting thus in low voices when the guide rode back to them.

"Masters," said he, "here on our left is the hillock upon which Biorn the Just had the double-tongued Vellon beheaded in the presence of his entire army, the traitor having driven off the king's allies and summoned the enemy to the camp, that he might have the appearance of saving Biorn's life."

All these reminiscences of old Norway did not seem to be to Musdœmon's taste, for he hurriedly interrupted the guide.

"Come, come, good man, be silent and go your way, without turning back so often. What do we care about the foolish stories of which these ruins and dead trees remind you? You annoy my master with your old wives' tales."

XXII

Now the hungry lion roars,
  And the wolf behowls the moon;
While the heavy ploughman snores,
  All with weary task foredone.
Now the wasted brands do glow,
  Whilst the screech-owl, screeching loud,
Puts the wretch that lies in woe
  In remembrance of a shroud.
Now it is the time of night,
  That the graves, all gaping wide,
Every one lets forth his sprite,
  In the church-way paths to glide.

SHAKESPEARE: *Midsummer Night's Dream.*

LET us now retrace our steps. We left Ordener and Spiagudry struggling laboriously up the brow of Oëlmœ cliff by the light of the rising moon. This rock, bare of vegetation at the point where it begins to curve, is, from this peculiarity, called by the Norwegian peasants the Vulture's Neck,— a name which gives an excellent idea of the aspect of this huge granite bowlder as seen from a distance.

As our travellers approached this part of the rock, the forest changed to heather. Grass gave place to moss; wild brier-roses, broom, and holly were substituted for oaks and beeches,— a scantier growth, which in mountainous regions always shows that the summit is near, as it indicates the gradual diminution of the stratum of earth covering what may be termed the skeleton of the mountain.

"Mr. Ordener," said Spiagudry, whose lively mind seemed ever a prey to a varying world of ideas, "this is a very tiresome climb, and it takes all my devotion to follow you. But it seems to me that I see a superb *convolvulus* yonder to the right; how I should like to examine it. Why is it not broad daylight? Don't you think it was a great piece of impertinence to value a learned man like me at no more than four paltry crowns? 'T is true, the famous Phædrus

was a slave, and Æsop, if we are to believe the learned Planudes, was sold at a fair like a beast of burden or household chattel. And who would not be proud to bear any sort of resemblance to the great Æsop?"

"Or to the celebrated Hans?" added Ordener, with a smile.

"By Saint Hospitius," replied the keeper, "do not utter that name so lightly; I swear I could readily forego the latter comparison. But wouldn't it be strange if Benignus Spiagudry, his companion in misfortune, should win the reward for his head? Mr. Ordener, you are more generous than Jason, for he did not give the golden fleece to the Argonaut pilot; and I am sure that your mission, although I do not clearly understand its object, is no less perilous than that of Jason."

"Well," said Ordener, "since you know Hans of Iceland, tell me something about him. You say that he is by no means a giant, as is generally supposed."

Spiagudry interrupted him: "Stop, master! Don't you hear footsteps behind us?"

"Yes," quietly answered the young man; "don't be alarmed; it is some animal frightened at our coming, and brushing against the bushes in its flight."

"You are right, my young Cæsar; it is so long since these woods have seen the face of man! If we may judge by its heavy tread, it must be a good-sized animal. It may be an elk or a reindeer; this part of Norway abounds in these beasts. Wildcats are also found here; I saw one myself, which was brought to Copenhagen; he was monstrous big. I must give you a description of this ferocious animal."

"My dear guide," said Ordener, "I would rather that you would give me a description of another and no less ferocious monster, the horrible Hans."

"Speak lower, sir! How calmly you utter that name! You do not know — Good Heavens, sir! just hear that!"

As Spiagudry said this, he drew closer to Ordener, who did distinctly hear a cry similar to the growl which, as

the reader may remember, had so alarmed the timid keeper on the stormy night of their departure from Throndhjem.

"Did you hear that?" he whispered, breathless with fright.

"To be sure I did," said Ordener; "but I don't see why you tremble so violently. It is the howl of some wild beast, possibly the cry of one of those very wildcats of which you were just talking. Did you expect to pass through such a place at this time of night without disturbing any of its inhabitants? I'll warrant you, old man, they are far more frightened than you are."

Spiagudry, seeing his young companion's composure, was somewhat reassured.

"Well, it may be, sir, that you are right. But that yell sounded terribly like a voice that I — It was a very poor idea, let me tell you, sir, to insist upon climbing up to this Vermund's castle. I fear we shall meet with some accident on the Vulture's Neck."

"Fear nothing while you are with me," answered Ordener.

"Oh, nothing disturbs you; but, sir, nobody but the blessed Saint Paul can handle vipers without getting bitten. You did not even notice, when we struck into this confounded footpath, that it seemed to have been recently trodden, and that the grass had not had time to lift its head since it was trampled."

"I confess that I did not pay much heed to it, and that my peace of mind is not dependent upon the state of a few blades of grass. See, we are now out of the thicket; we shall hear no more from the wild beasts; I need not therefore tell you, my brave guide, to summon all your courage, but rather bid you muster all your strength, for this path, cut in the rock, will doubtless be even steeper than the one we have left."

"It is not that it is steeper, sir, but the learned traveller, Suckson, says that it is often impeded by rocks or heavy stones too big to be handled, over which it is not easy to

clamber. Among others, there is, just beyond the Maläer postern, which must be close at hand, a huge triangular granite bowlder, which I have always had the greatest desire to see. Schoenning asserts that he discovered the three primitive Runic characters on it."

The travellers had for some time been climbing the face of the rock; they now reached a small, ruined tower, through which their path led, and to which Spiagudry drew Ordener's attention.

"This is the Maläer postern, sir. This path hewn in the living rock contains several curious structures, which show the ancient style of fortification used in our Norwegian manor-houses. This postern, which was always guarded by four men-at-arms, was the first outwork of Vermund's fort. Speaking of posterns, the monk Urensius makes an odd remark; he asks whether the word *janua*, derived from Janus, whose temple doors were so widely celebrated, has any connection with 'Janissary,' a name applied to the troops who guard the sultan's gate. It would be strange enough if the name of the mildest prince known to history should have passed to the most ferocious soldiers upon earth."

In the midst of all the keeper's scientific twaddle, they journeyed laboriously along, over loose stones and sharp pebbles, mingled with the short, slippery grass which sometimes grows upon rocks. Ordener beguiled his weariness by thinking how delightful it would be to gaze once more upon distant Munkholm; all at once Spiagudry exclaimed: "Oh, I see it! This sight alone repays me for all my trouble. I see it, sir, I see it!"

"See what?" said Ordener, who was just then thinking of Ethel.

"Why, sir, the three-sided pyramid described by Schoenning. I shall be the third scientific man, with Professor Schoenning and Bishop Isleif, to have the pleasure of studying it. Only it is a great pity that there is no moon."

As they approached the famous bowlder, Spiagudry ut-

tered an exclamation of horror and distress. Ordener, in surprise, asked with some interest the cause of this new emotion; but the archæologist was for a time unable to reply.

"You thought," said Ordener, "that this rock blocked the path; on the contrary, you should be grateful to find that it leaves it entirely open."

"And that is the very thing which provokes me," said Benignus, in piteous accents.

"What do you mean?"

"Why, sir," replied the keeper, "do you not see that the position of the pyramid has been changed; that the base, which rested on the path, is now uppermost; and that the bowlder stands upside down, upon the very side on which Schoenning discovered the primordial Runic letters? I am indeed unfortunate!"

"It is a pity," said the young man.

"And besides," hastily added Spiagudry, "the overturning of this mass of stone proves the presence of some superhuman being. Unless it be the work of the Devil, there is but one man on Norway whose arm could —"

"My poor guide, there you are, giving way again to your foolish fears. Who knows but this stone has lain thus for more than a hundred years?"

"It is a hundred and fifty years, it is true," said Spiagudry, more quietly, "since the last scientific man observed it. But it seems to me to have been moved recently; the place which it formerly occupied is still damp. Look, sir."

Ordener, impatient to reach the ruins, dragged his guide away from the marvellous pyramid, and succeeded, by gentle words, in removing the fresh fears with which this strange displacement inspired the aged scholar.

"See here, old man, you can take up your abode on the borders of this lake, and devote yourself to your important studies, when you get the thousand crowns reward for Han's head."

"You are right, noble sir; but do not speak so lightly

of so dubious a victory. I must give you one piece of advice which may help you to overcome the monster."

Ordener drew eagerly toward Spiagudry. "Advice! what is it?"

"The robber," said the latter, in a low voice, casting uneasy glances around him,—"the robber wears at his belt a skull, from which he usually drinks. It is the skull of his son, of the mutilation of whose corpse I am accused."

"Speak a little louder, and don't be frightened; I can hardly hear you. Well, this skull?"

"This skull," said Spiagudry, bending to whisper in the young man's ear, "you must try to obtain. The monster attaches a certain superstitious importance to its possession. His son's skull once yours, you can do what you will with him."

"That is all very well, my good fellow; but how am I to get this skull?"

"By some stratagem, sir. While the monster sleeps, perhaps."

Ordener interrupted him: "Enough. Your good advice is useless. I cannot be supposed to know when my enemy is asleep. My sword is the only weapon which I recognize."

"Sir, sir! it has never been proved that the archangel Michael did not resort to stratagem to vanquish Satan."

Here Spiagudry stopped short, and stretching out his hands, exclaimed in scarcely audible tones, "Oh, heavens! Oh, heavens! What do I see? Look, master; is not that a short man walking before us in the path?"

"Faith," said Ordener, raising his eyes, "I see nothing."

"Nothing, sir? To be sure, the path bends, and he has disappeared behind that rock. Go no farther, sir, I entreat you."

"Surely, if the person whom you imagine that you saw disappeared so quickly, it shows that he has no idea of waiting for us; and if he chooses to run away, that is no reason why we should do the same."

"Watch over us, holy Hospitius!" ejaculated Spiagudry, who in all moments of danger remembered his favorite saint.

"You must," added Ordener, "have taken the flickering shadow of some startled owl for a man."

"And yet I really thought I saw a little man; to be sure, the moonlight often produces strange delusions. It was in the moonlight that Baldan, lord of Merneugh, took a white bed-curtain for his mother's ghost; which led him to go next day and confess himself guilty of parricide before the judges of Christiania, who were about to condemn the dead woman's innocent page. So we may say that the moonlight saved that page's life."

No one was ever more ready than Spiagudry to forget the present in the past. One anecdote from the vast storehouse of his memory was enough to banish all thought of the present. Thus the story of Baldan diverted his fears, and he added in a tranquil voice, "It is quite possible that the moonlight deceived me too."

Meantime, they gained the top of the Vulture's Neck, and began to get another glimpse of the ruins, which the steep slope of the rock had hidden from them as they ascended.

The reader need not be surprised if we frequently encounter ruins on the topmost peak of Norwegian mountains. No one who has travelled among the mountains of Europe can have failed to notice the remains of fortresses and castles clinging to the top of the loftiest peaks, like the deserted nest of a vulture or the eyrie of some dead eagle. In Norway especially, at the period of which we write, the variety of these aerial structures was as amazing as their number. Sometimes they consisted of long dismantled walls, enclosing a rock, sometimes of slender pointed turrets, surmounting a sharp peak, like a crown; or upon the snowy summit of a lofty mountain might be seen great towers grouped about a massive donjon, looking in the distance like an antique diadem. Here were the graceful pointed arches of a Gothic cloister, side by side with the heavy Egyptian

columns of a Saxon church; there, close by some pagan chieftain's citadel with its square towers, stood the crenellated fortress of a Christian lord; or, again, a stronghold crumbling with age, neighbored by a monastery ravaged by war. Of all these edifices — a strange medley of architectural styles, now almost forgotten, daringly constructed in apparently inaccessible spots — but a few ruins remained to bear witness alike to the power and the impotence of man. Within their walls deeds were perhaps done far worthier of repetition than all the stories which are written now; but time passed; the eyes which witnessed them are closed; the tradition of them died with the lapse of years, like a fire which is not fed; and when that is lost, who can read the secret of the ages?

The manor-house of Vermund the Refugee, which our two travellers had now reached, was one of those places about which popular superstition has woven endless amazing histories and marvellous legends. By its walls — composed of pebbles bedded in cement, now harder than stone — it was easy to determine that it was built about the fifth or sixth century.

But one of its five towers remained standing; the other four, more or less dilapidated, and strewing the top of the rock with broken fragments, were connected by a line of ruins, which also showed the ancient limits of the inner courts of the castle. It was very difficult to penetrate this enclosure, littered as it was with stones and shattered blocks of granite, and overgrown with weeds and brambles which, clambering from ruin to ruin, crowned the broken walls with verdure, or overhung the precipice with long, flexible branches. On these drooping tendrils, it was said, dim ghosts often swung in the moonlight,— the guilty spirits of those who had wilfully drowned themselves in Lake Sparbo; and to these twigs, too, the water-sprite fastened the cloud which was to bear him home again at sunrise. Fearful mysteries were these, more than once witnessed by hardy fishermen,

when, to take advantage of the time when dogfish sleep,[1] they ventured to row as far as Oëlmœ cliff, which loomed up in the darkness over their heads like the broken arch of some huge bridge.

Our two adventurers climbed the manor wall, though not without some difficulty, and crept through a crevice, for the door was filled with fragments. The only tower which, as we have said, remained standing, was at the extreme edge of the rock. It was, Spiagudry told Ordener, from the top of this tower that Munkholm lighthouse could be seen. They went towards it, although the darkness was at that moment complete, the moon being hidden by a great black cloud. They were about to cross a breach in another wall, in order to enter what was once the second courtyard of the castle, when Benignus stopped short, and suddenly seized Ordener's arm with such a trembling hand that the young man himself almost fell.

"What now?" asked Ordener in surprise.

Benignus, without answering, pressed his arm more firmly, as if begging him to be silent.

"Well—" said the young man.

Another pressure, accompanied by an ill-suppressed sigh, decided him to wait patiently until this fresh fright should cease.

At last Spiagudry asked, in a stifled voice: "Well, master, what do you say now?"

"To what?" said Ordener.

"Yes, sir," added the other, in the same tone; "I suppose you are sorry now that you came here?"

"No, indeed my worthy guide; on the contrary, I hope to climb higher still. Why should you think that I am sorry?"

"What, sir, did you not see?"

"See! What?"

[1] The dogfish are greatly dreaded by fishermen, because they frighten other fish.

"You saw nothing?" repeated the honest keeper, with ever-increasing terror.

"Truly I did not," impatiently answered Ordener; "I saw nothing, and I heard nothing but the sound of your teeth chattering with fright."

"What! not behind that wall, in the shadow, those two flaming eyes, like comets, fixed directly upon us,— did you not see them?"

"Upon my honour, I did not."

"You did not see them move up and down, and then disappear among the ruins?"

"I don't know what you are talking about. Besides, what if I did see them?"

"What! Mr. Ordener, don't you know that there is but one man in Norway whose eyes gleam in that way in the dark?"

"Well, and what then? Who is this man with the eyes of a cat? Is it Hans, your much-dreaded Icelander? So much the better if he be here! It will spare us a journey to Walderhog."

This "so much the better" was not to the taste of Spiagudry, who could not help betraying his secret thought by the involuntary ejaculation: "Oh, sir, you promised to leave me at the village of Surb, a mile away from the battle."

The generous and kindly Ordener understood, and smiled.

"You are right, old man; it would be unfair to make you share my danger; therefore fear nothing. You see this Hans of Icelander everywhere. May there not be some wild-cat lurking among these ruins, whose eyes shine quite as fiercely as his do?"

Once more Spiagudry's fears were set at rest, either because Ordener's suggestion struck him as very plausible, or because his young companion's composure proved contagious.

"Ah, sir," said he, "if it had not been for you I should have died a dozen deaths from fright as I climbed these

rocks. To be sure, I should never have attempted such a task if it had not been for you."

The moon, which now broke through the clouds, showed them the gateway to the highest tower, the foot of which they had already reached. They entered, after raising a thick curtain of vines, which showered them with drowsy lizards and old decayed bird's-nests. The keeper picked up a couple of pebbles, and striking them together, produced a few sparks, by means of which he soon set fire to a heap of dead leaves and dry branches collected by Ordener. In a few moments a bright column of flames rose into the air, and banishing the darkness about them, permitted them to examine the interior of the tower.

Nothing was left but a circular wall, which was very thick, and was overgrown with moss and vines. The ceiling and floors of its four stories had crumbled away one after the other, and now formed a vast heap of rubbish upon the ground. A narrow spiral staircase, entirely without a railing, and broken in various places, was built in the wall, to the top of which it led. As the fire began to crackle cheerily, a swarm of owls and ospreys flew up heavily, with strange, weird cries, and huge bats now and then hovered above the flames, poised upon their ashen wings.

"Our hosts do not receive us very merrily," said Ordener; "but do not take fright again."

"I, sir," replied Spiagudry, seating himself close to the fire; "I fear an owl or a bat! I have dwelt with corpses, and I do not fear vampires. Ah, I only dread the living! I am not brave, I admit; but at least I am not superstitious. Come, sir, take my advice; let us laugh at these ladies in black petticoats and with such hoarse voices, and let us be thinking of supper."

Ordener thought of nothing but Munkholm.

"I have here a few provisions," said Spiagudry, drawing his knapsack from under his cloak; "but if your appetite be as good as mine, this black bread and mouldy cheese will not

go far. I see that we shall have to observe the limits of the law laid down by the French king, Philip the Fair,— *Nemo audeat comedere præter duo fercula cum potagio.* There must be nests of gulls or pheasants on the top of this tower; but how are we to get there by that dilapidated staircase, which does not look as if it would bear the weight of anything but a sylph?"

"Still," answered Ordener, "it must needs bear mine, for I shall certainly climb to the top of this tower."

"What, master! to get a few gull's-nests? Do not, for mercy's sake, be so rash? It is not worth while to kill yourself for the sake of a better supper. Besides, suppose you should make a mistake and take the nests of these owls?"

"Much I care for your nests! Didn't you tell me that I could see Munkholm light from the top of this tower?"

"So you can, young master; it lies to the south. I see that your desire to establish this point, so important to the science of geography, was your motive for taking this fatiguing journey to Vermund castle. But do consider, good Mr. Ordener, that it may sometimes be the duty of a zealous student to brave toil and hardship, but never to run into danger. I implore you, do not attempt that poor broken-down staircase, upon which even a crow would not venture to perch."

Benignus was by no means anxious to be left alone in the tower. As he rose to take Ordener's hand, his knapsack, which was lying across his knees, fell upon some stones, and gave forth a clear metallic ring.

"What have you in your wallet that rings so loudly?" asked Ordener.

This was such a delicate question that Spiagudry lost all desire to restrain his young companion.

"Well," said he, without answering the question, "if, in spite of all my prayers, you persist in climbing to the top of this tower, at least beware of the broken places in the stairs."

"But," repeated Ordener, "you have not told me what you have in your knapsack to make it sound so metallic."

This indiscreet persistence was extremely unpleasant to the old keeper, who cursed the questioner from the bottom of his soul.

"Oh, noble master," he replied, "how can you show such curiosity about a paltry iron barber's-basin, which clinked against a stone? If I cannot persuade you to change your mind," he made haste to add, "come back as soon as you can, and be careful to hold fast to the vines which cover the wall. You will see Munkholm lighthouse to the south, between Frigga's Footstools."

Spiagudry could not have said anything better calculated to drive every other idea out of the young man's head. Ordener, throwing aside his mantle, sprang toward the staircase, up which the keeper followed him with his eyes until he could only see him move like a faint shadow upward to the top of the wall, dimly lighted by the flickering flames and the cold rays of the moon.

Then reseating himself and picking up his knapsack, he said: "Now, my dear Benignus Spiagudry, while that young lynx cannot see you, and you are alone, make haste and break the cumbrous iron envelope which prevents you from taking possession, *oculis et manu*, of the treasure undoubtedly contained in this casket. When it is delivered from its prison, it will be lighter to carry and easier to conceal.

Arming himself with a huge stone, he was about to break the lid of the box, when the firelight, falling on the iron lock, suddenly arrested the antiquarian.

"By Saint Willibrod the Numismatologist, I am not mistaken," he exclaimed, eagerly rubbing the rusty lid; "those are indeed the arms of Griffenfeld. I came near doing a very foolish thing in breaking this lock. This may be the only perfect copy in existence of those famous armorial bearings destroyed in 1676 by the hangman's hand. The devil! I will not touch this box. Whatever may be the value

of its contents, unless, as seems scarcely probable, it should be coin of Palmyra or Carthaginian money, this is certainly still more precious. So here I am the sole owner of the now obsolete arms of Griffenfeld! Let me hide this treasure carefully, and I may some time discover the secret of opening the casket without committing an act of vandalism. The Griffenfeld arms! Oh, yes! here are the hand of Justice and the scales upon a gules ground. What luck!"

At each fresh heraldic discovery that he made as he polished the ancient coffer, he uttered a cry of admiration or an exclamation of content.

"By means of a solvent, I can open the box without breaking the lock. It probably contains the ex-chancellor's treasure. If any one, tempted by the bait of the four crowns offered by the council for my head, should recognize me now and stop me, I can readily buy my freedom. So this blessed casket will save me."

As he spoke, he looked up mechanically. All at once his grotesque features changed with lightning speed from an expression of intense delight to that of stupefied dismay; his limbs trembled convulsively, his eyes became fixed, his brow furrowed, his mouth gaped wide, and his voice stuck in his throat.

Before him, on the other side of the fire, stood a little man with folded arms. By his dress of blood-stained skins, his stone axe, his red beard, and the ravenous stare fastened on his face, the wretched keeper at once recognized the frightful character whose last visit he had received in the Spladgest at Throndhjem.

"It is I!" said the little man, with terrible calmness. "That casket will save you," he added with a bitterly sarcastic smile. "Spiagudry, is this the way to Thoctree?"

The unfortunate man tried to stammer a word of excuse.

"Thoctree! Sir — My lord and master,— I was going —"

"You were going to Walderhog," replied the other, in a voice of thunder.

The terrified Spiagudry mustered all his forces to deny the charge.

"You were guiding an enemy to my retreat. I thank you! 'Twill be one living man the less. Fear nothing, faithful guide; he shall follow you."

The luckless keeper strove to shriek, but could with difficulty utter a feeble moan.

"Why are you so frightened at my presence? You were seeking me. Hark ye! Do not speak, or you are a dead man."

The little man swung his stone axe above the keeper's head. He added, in a voice which sounded like the roar of a mountain torrent as it bursts from some subterranean cave: "You have betrayed me."

"No, your Grace! No, your Excellency!" gasped Benignus, scarcely able to articulate these words of apology and entreaty.

The other gave vent to a low growl.

Ah! you would deceive me again! Hope not to succeed. Listen! I was on the roof of the Spladgest when you sealed your compact with that mad fool; twice you have heard my voice. It was my voice you heard amid the storm upon your road; it was I whom you met in Vygla tower; it was I who said, 'We shall meet again!'"

The terrified keeper looked about him in despair, as if to summon help. The little man went on: "I could not let those soldiers who pursued you, escape my wrath; they belonged to the Munkholm regiment. I knew that I should not lose you. Spiagudry, it was I whom you saw again in Oëlmœ village beneath the miner's hat; it was my footstep and my voice that you heard, and my eyes that you saw as you climbed to these ruins. It was I!"

Alas! the unfortunate man was but too well convinced of these dreadful truths. He rolled upon the ground at the

feet of his fearful judge, crying faint and agonizing accents, "Mercy!"

The little man, his arms still folded, fixed upon him a murderous look, more scorching even than the flames upon the hearth.

"Ask that casket to save you, as you said it would do," he said sarcastically.

"Mercy, sir, mercy!" repeated the expiring victim.

"I warned you to be faithful and to be dumb. You have not been faithful; but in future I protest that you shall be dumb."

The keeper, grasping the horrible meaning of these words, uttered a deep groan.

"Fear nothing," said the man: "I will not part you from your treasure."

At these words, unfastening his leather belt, he passed it through a ring on the cover of the casket, and by this means hung it about Spiagudry's neck, the poor fellow bending beneath its weight.

"Come!" rejoined the monster, "to what devil will you confide your soul? Make haste and summon him, lest another demon whom you do not care about, take possession of it before him."

The desperate old man, past all power of speech, fell at the little man's knees, making countless gestures of terror and entreaty.

"No, no!" said his tormentor; "my faithful Spiagudry, you need not be distressed at leaving your young companion without a guide. I promise you that he shall go where you go. Follow me; you do but show him the way. Come!"

With these words, seizing the wretched man in his powerful arms, he bore him from the tower as a tiger might carry off a writhing serpent, and a moment later a fearful shriek rang through the ruins, mingled with a horrible burst of laughter.

XXIII

Yes, we may reveal to the faithful lover's tear-wet eye the distant object of his adoration. But alas! the moments of expectation, the farewells, the thoughts, the sweet and bitter memories, the enchanting dreams of two beings that love! Who can restore these?— MATURIN: *Bertram.*

MEANTIME the venturesome Ordener, after a score or more of narrow escapes from a fall during his perilous ascent, reached the top of the thick, round tower wall. At his unexpected visit, dusky old owls abruptly aroused from their nests, flew up, staring at him as they sailed away, and loose stones displaced by his tread, rolled into the abyss, rebounding from projections in the masonry with a remote, hollow roar.

At any other time, Ordener's gaze would have roamed far and wide, and his mind would have dwelt upon the depth of the gulf yawning beneath him, which seemed even greater from the thick darkness of the night. His eye, taking in all the great masses of shadow on the horizon, their sombre outlines but half revealed by a nebulous moon, would have striven to distinguish between mist and rocks, between mountains and clouds; his imagination would have lent life to all the gigantic forms, the fantastic shapes with which moonlight clothes hills and vapors. He would have listened to the indistinct murmur of lake and woods blended with the shrill sough of the wind through the crevices in the stones and through the dried grass at his feet, and his fancy would have lent words to all those low voices through which material Nature speaks while man sleeps, in the silence of the night. But although the scene unconsciously acted upon his whole being, other thoughts filled his mind. Hardly had his foot touched the top of the wall, when his eye turned to the southern sky, and he thrilled with unspeakable rapture as he saw beyond and between two small mountains a point of

light gleaming upon the horizon like a red star. It was Munkholm beacon.

None but those who have tasted the truest joys which life can give can understand the young man's happiness. His soul was filled with delight; his heart beat violently. Motionless, his eye fixed, he gazed at the star of hope and consolation. It seemed as if that beam of light traversing the darkness, and coming from the spot which held all that made life worth living, bore with it something of his Ethel. Ah! do not doubt it; one soul may sometimes hold mysterious communion with another, though widely parted by time and space. In vain the world of reality rears its barriers between two beings who love; inhabitants of an ideal world, they are present to each other in absence, they are united in death. What can mere bodily separation or physical distance avail if two hearts be indissolubly bound by a single thought and a common desire? True love may suffer, but it cannot die.

Who has not repeatedly lingered on a rainy night beneath some dimly lighted window? Who has not passed and repassed a certain door, rapturously wandered up and down before a certain house? Who has not abruptly retraced his steps, to follow, at evening, along some deserted, winding street, a floating skirt or a white veil suddenly recognized in the twilight? He who has never experienced these feelings may safely say that he has never loved.

As he gazed at the distant lighthouse, Ordener pondered. A sad and ironical contentment took the place of his first transports; a thousand varying thoughts and ideas crowded upon his agitated spirit. "Yes," said he, "a man must labor long and painfully to win at last a ray of happiness in the vast night of existence. So she is there! She sleeps, she dreams, perhaps she thinks of me! But who will tell her that her Ordener even now hangs above an abyss, sad and lonely, surrounded by darkness,— her Ordener, who retains nothing of her but a single ringlet pressed to his heart and a faint light upon the horizon!" Then, looking at the ruddy glow of the huge fire burning in the tower beneath, and escaping

through the crevices in the wall, he murmured: "Perhaps from one of her prison windows she casts an indifferent glance at the far-off flame upon this hearth."

All at once, a loud shriek and a prolonged burst of laughter rose from the brink of the precipice below; he turned abruptly, and saw that the interior of the tower was vacant. Alarmed for the safety of the old man, he hurriedly descended; but he had taken but a few steps when he heard a dull splash, as if a heavy body had been thrown into the deep waters of the lake.

XXIV

Count Don Sancho Diaz, lord of Saldana, shed bitter tears in his prison cell. Full of despair, he sighed forth in solitude his complaints against King Alfonso: "Oh, sad moments, when my white locks remind me how many years I have already passed in this horrible prison!"—*Old Spanish Romance.*

THE sun was setting, and its horizontal beams threw the dark shadow of the prison-bars upon Schumacker's woollen gown and Ethel's crape dress, as they sat by the high-arched casement, the old man in a great Gothic chair, the young girl upon a stool at his feet. The prisoner seemed to be brooding, in his favorite melancholy attitude. His bald, wrinkled brow rested on his hand, and his face was hidden save for the long white beard which hung down his breast in sad disorder.

"Father," said Ethel, trying by every means to rouse him, "my lord and father, I dreamed last night of a happy future. Look, dear father; raise your eyes, and see that bright, cloudless sky."

"I can only see the sky," the old man replied, "through my prison-bars, as I can only see your future, Ethel, through my misfortunes."

Then his head, for an instant lifted, fell back upon his hands, and both were silent.

"Father," rejoined the young girl, a moment later, in a timid voice, "are you thinking of Lord Ordener?"

"Ordener?" said the old man, as if striving to recall the name. "Ah, I know whom you mean! What of him?"

"Do you think that he will soon return, father? He has been gone so long! — this is the fourth day."

The old man shook his head sadly.

"I think that when four years have passed, his return will be as close at hand as it is to-day."

Ethel turned pale.

"Heavens! Then you think that he will not come back?"

Schumacker made no answer. The young girl repeated her question in an anxious and beseeching tone.

"Did he not promise to return?" said the old man, curtly.

"Yes, to be sure!" eagerly answered Ethel.

"Well, how can you reckon upon his coming, then? Is he not a man? I believe that the vulture will return to a dead body, but I have no faith in the return of spring when the year is on the wane."

Ethel, seeing that her father had relapsed into his wonted melancholy, took courage; the voice of her young and virginal soul proudly denied the old man's morbid philosophy.

"Father," she said firmly, "Lord Ordener will return; he is not like other men."

"What do you know about it, girl?"

"What you know yourself, my lord and father."

"I know nothing," said the old man. "I heard words from a man, and they promised the actions of a god." Then he added, with a bitter smile: "I have weighed them well, and I see that they are too beautiful to be true."

"And I, sir, believe them because they are so beautiful."

"Oh, girl, if you were what you should be, Countess of Tönsberg and Princess of Wollin, surrounded, as you would be, by a swarm of handsome traitors and selfish adorers, such credulity would be most dangerous."

"It is not credulity, my lord and father, but confidence."

"It is easy to see, Ethel, that there is French blood in your veins."

This idea led the old man, by an imperceptible transition, to a different train of thought, and he added, with a certain complacency:—

"For those who degraded your father to a point lower yet than that from which he had raised himself, cannot deny that you are the daughter of Charlotte, Princess of Tarentum, or that one of your ancestresses was Adela (or Edila), Countess of Flanders, whose name you bear."

Ethel's mind was running on quite other things.

"Father, you misjudge the noble Ordener."

"Noble, my daughter! What do you mean by that? I have made men noble who proved themselves very vile."

"I do not mean, sir, that his nobility is of the kind conferred by man."

"Do you know that he is descended from some 'jarl' or 'hersa'?" [1]

"I know as little of his descent as you do, father. He may be," she added, with downcast eyes, "the son of a vassal or a serf. Alas! crowns and lyres may be painted upon the velvet covering of a footstool. I only mean that, judged by your own standard, my revered sire, he has a noble heart."

Of all the men whom she had seen, Ordener was the one whom Ethel knew at once best and least. He had dawned upon her destiny, like one of those angels who visited the first men, wrapped alike in mystery and in radiant light. Their mere presence revealed their nature, and they were at once adored. Thus Ordener had shown Ethel what men usually conceal, his heart; he had been silent concerning that of which they usually make boast, his country and his family. His look was enough for Ethel, and she had faith in his words. She loved him, she had given him her life, she was intimate with his soul, and she did not know his name.

[1] The ancient aristocracy of Norway, before Griffenfeld established a regular order of nobility, were entitled "hersa" (baron) or "jarl" (count). The English word "earl" is derived from the latter.

"A noble heart!" repeated the old man; "a noble heart! Such nobility is higher than any in the gift of kings; it is the gift of God. He is less lavish with it than are they."

The prisoner raised his eyes to his shattered escutcheon as he added: "And he never withdraws it."

"Then, father," said the girl, "he who retains the one should be easily consoled for the loss of the other."

These words startled her father and restored his courage. He replied in a firm voice:—

"You are right, girl. But you do not know that the disgrace held by the world to be unjust is sometimes confirmed by our secret conscience. Such is our poor nature; once unhappy, countless voices which slumbered in the time of our prosperity wake within us and accuse us of faults and errors before unnoted."

"Say not so, illustrious father," said Ethel, deeply moved; for by the old man's altered voice, she felt that he had allowed the secret source of one of his greatest sorrows to escape him.

She raised her eyes to his face, and kissing his pallid, withered hand, she added gently: "You are severe in your judgment of two noble men, Lord Ordener and yourself, my revered father."

"You decide lightly, Ethel. One would say that you did not know that life is a serious matter."

"Am I wrong then, sir, to do justice to the generous Ordener?"

Schumacker frowned, with a dissatisfied air.

"I cannot approve, my daughter, of such admiration for a stranger whom you may never see again."

"Oh," said the young girl, upon whose soul these cold words fell like a heavy weight, "do not believe it. We shall see him again. Was it not for your sake that he went forth to brave such danger?"

"Like yourself, I confess that I was at first deceived by his promises. But no; he will never go upon his mission, and therefore he will never return to us."

"He did go, sir; he did go."

The tone in which the young girl pronounced these words was almost that of one offended and insulted. She felt herself outraged in her Ordener's person. Alas! she was only too sure in her own soul of the truth which she asserted.

The prisoner replied, seemingly unmoved: "Very well. If he has really gone to fight that brigand, if he has rushed into such danger, it comes to the same thing,— he will never return."

Poor Ethel! how often a word indifferently uttered, painfully galls the hidden wound in an anxious and tortured heart! She bent her pale face to hide from her father's stern gaze the tears which, in spite of all her efforts, fell from her burning eyes.

"Oh, father," she sighed, "while you speak thus, this noble and unfortunate youth may be dying for your sake!"

The aged minister shook his head doubtfully.

"That I can neither believe nor wish. And even so, how am I to blame? I should merely show myself ungrateful to the young man, as so many others have shown themselves to me."

A deep sigh was Ethel's only answer; and Schumacker, turning to his table, tore up with an absent air a few leaves of "Plutarch's Lives," which volume lay before him, already tattered in countless places, and covered with marginal notes. A moment later the door opened, and Schumacker, without looking up, cried out as usual: "Do not enter! do not disturb me! I will see no one!"

"It is his Excellency the governor," was the answer.

An elderly man dressed in the uniform of a general, with the collars of the Elephant, the Dannebrog, and the Golden Fleece about his neck, advanced toward Schumacker, who half rose, muttering, "The governor! the governor!" The general bowed respectfully to Ethel, as she stood at her father's side, timidly and anxiously watching him.

Perhaps before proceeding further, it will be well briefly to recall the motives of General Levin's visit to Munkholm. The reader will remember the unpleasant news which dis-

turbed the old governor, in the twentieth chapter of this truthful narrative. On receiving it, he at once saw the importance of questioning Schumacker; but he was extremely reluctant to do so. The idea of tormenting a poor prisoner, already a prey to so much that was painful, and whom he had known in his days of power, of severely scanning the secrets of an unfortunate man, even if guilty, was most unpleasant to his kind and generous soul. Still, his duty to the king required it. He ought not to leave Throndhjem without such fresh light as might be gained by questioning the apparent author of the rebellion among the miners. Accordingly, the night before his departure, after a long and confidential talk with Countess d'Ahlefeld, the governor made up his mind to visit the prisoner. As he approached the fortress, thoughts of the interests of the State, of the advantage to which his many personal enemies might turn what they would style his negligence, and perhaps too the crafty words of the chancellor's wife, worked within him, and confirmed him in his purpose. He therefore climbed to the Lion of Schleswig tower with every intention to be severe; he resolved to bear himself toward Schumacker the conspirator as if he had never known Griffenfeld the chancellor,— to cast aside all his memories, and even his natural disposition, and to speak as a firm judge to this former fellow-sharer in the royal favor.

So soon, however, as he entered the ex-chancellor's apartment, the old man's venerable though sombre face made a strong impression upon him; Ethel's sweet though dignified expression touched him; and with his first glance at the two prisoners, his stern intentions died within him.

He advanced toward the fallen minister, and involuntarily offered him his hand, saying, without remarking that his politeness met with no response:—

"How are you, Count Griffenf —" His old habit overcame him for the moment; then he corrected himself quickly —"Mr. Schumacker?" With this he paused, satisfied and exhausted by such an effort.

Silence ensued. The general racked his brain to find words harsh enough to correspond with this brutal beginning.

"Well," Schumacker said at last, "are you the governor of the province of Throndhjem?"

The governor, somewhat surprised to find himself questioned by the man he had meant to question, bowed his head.

"Then," added the prisoner, "I have a complaint to lay before you."

"A complaint! What is it? what is it?" And the kind-hearted Levin's countenance assumed a look of interest.

Schumacker went on, in a tone of considerable annoyance: "By order of the viceroy I am to be left free and undisturbed in this donjon."

"I am aware of the order."

"And yet, Governor, I am importuned and annoyed by visits."

"Visits! and from whom?" cried the general; "tell me who dares —"

"You, Governor."

These words, uttered in a haughty tone, offended the general. He answered, in a somewhat irritated voice: "You forget that my power knows no limits when it is a question of serving the king."

"Unless," said Schumacker, "it were those of the respect due to misfortune. But men know nothing of that."

The ex-chancellor said this as if speaking to himself. The governor heard him.

"Yes, indeed! yes, indeed! I was wrong, Count Griff — Mr. Schumacker, I should say; I should leave the privilege of anger to you, since the power is mine."

Schumacker was silent for a moment. "There is," he resumed thoughtfully, "something about your face and voice, Governor, which reminds me of a man I once knew. It was very long ago. No one but myself can remember those days. It was in the time of my prosperity. He was one Levin de Knud, of Mecklenburg. Did you ever know the foolish fellow?"

"I knew him," quietly replied the general.

"Oh, you remember him! I thought it was only in adversity that we remembered."

"Was he not a captain in the Royal Guards?" added the governor.

"Yes, a mere captain, although the king loved him dearly. But he thought of nothing but pleasure, and seemed to have no ambition. He was a strange, mad fellow. Can you conceive that a favorite could be so moderate in his desires?"

"I can understand it."

"I was fond of this Levin de Knud, because he never gave me any alarm. He was the king's friend as he might have been the friend of any other man. It seemed as if he loved him for his own sake, and not for his position."

The general would have interrupted Schumacker; but the latter persisted, either from a spirit of contradiction, or because the train of thought into which he had drifted really pleased him.

"Since you knew this Captain Levin, Governor, you probably know that he had a son who died young. But do you remember what happened at the birth of this son?"

"I can better recall what occurred at the time of his death," said the general, covering his eyes with his hand, and in a faltering voice.

"But," continued the heedless Schumacker, "this fact was known to very few persons, and it will show you just how peculiar this Levin was. The king wished to be the child's godfather; would you believe that Levin refused? He did more; he chose an old beggar who hung about the palace gates, to hold his son at the baptismal font. I never could understand the reason for such an act of lunacy."

"I will tell you," replied the general. "In choosing a guardian for his son's soul, this Captain Levin doubtless thought that a poor man had more influence with God than a king."

Schumacker considered for a moment, then said: "You are right."

The governor again attempted to turn the conversation to the object of his visit. But Schumacker cut him short.

"Excuse me; if it be true that you know this Levin of Mecklenburg, let me talk of him. Of all the men whom I knew in the days of my grandeur, he is the only one whose memory does not inspire me with disgust or horror. Although he carried his peculiarity to the verge of folly, his noble qualities, none the less, made him one man in a thousand."

"I do not agree with you. This Levin was no better than other men. In fact, there are many who are better."

Schumacker folded his arms, and raised his eyes to heaven. "Yes, that is the way with them all. You cannot praise a worthy man in their presence, that they do not instantly seek to disparage him. They poison everything, even the pleasure of just praise, rare as it is."

"If you knew me, you would not accuse me of disparaging Gener — I mean, Captain Levin."

"Nonsense! nonsense," said the prisoner; "for loyalty and generosity, there were never two men like this Levin de Knud, and to say a word to the contrary is both an outrageous slander and a flattery of this miserable human race."

"I assure you," returned the general, trying to assuage Schumacker's wrath, "that I have not the slightest intention of wronging Levin de Knud."

"Do not say that. Although he was so foolish, the rest of mankind is anything but like him. They are a false, ungrateful, envious set of slanderers. Do you know that Levin de Knud gave more than half his income to the Copenhagen hospitals?"

"I did not know that you knew it."

"There it is!" triumphantly exclaimed the old man. "You thought that you could safely brand him, trusting to my ignorance of the poor fellow's good deeds!"

"Not at all, not at all!"

"Do you suppose, too, that I don't know that he persuaded the king to give the regiment which he intended for him, to

an officer who had wounded him in a duel, because, he said, the other outranked him? "

"I thought that transaction was a secret."

"Well, tell me, Governor of Throndhjem, does that make it any less beautiful? If Levin concealed his virtues, is that a reason for denying them? Oh, how much alike men are! How dare you compare the noble Levin with them,— he who, when he could not save a soldier convicted of an attempt to murder him, settled a pension upon his murderer's widow? "

"Pooh! who would not do as much? "

Here Schumacker exploded. "Who? You! I! Any other man, Sir Governor! Because you wear the showy uniform of a general, and stars and crosses on your breast, do you think yourself a very meritorious person? You are a general, and poor Levin, I dare say, died a captain. True, he was a foolish fellow, and never thought of promotion."

"If he did not think of it himself, the king in his goodness thought of it for him."

"Goodness? Say, rather, justice, if there be such a thing as the justice of a king! Well, what signal reward did he receive? "

"His Majesty paid Levin de Knud far beyond his deserts."

"Capital! " cried the aged minister, clapping his hands. "A faithful captain is perhaps, after thirty years' service, made a major; and this distinguished mark of favor offends you, noble general? The Persian proverb is true which says that the setting sun is jealous of the rising moon."

Schumacker's fury was so great that the general could scarcely get in the words: "If you persist in interrupting me — You will not let me explain —"

"No, no! " continued the other; "I thought at first sight, General, that I caught a certain likeness between you and my good Levin; but no! there is none."

"Do but listen to me —"

"Listen to you! and hear you say that Levin de Knud is unworthy of some trifling reward? "

"I swear it is not —"

"You will presently — I know you men — try to persuade me that he is a knave, a hypocrite, and a villain, like the rest of you."

"No, indeed!"

"How do I know? Or perhaps that he betrayed a friend, persecuted a benefactor, as you all do; or poisoned his father, or murdered his mother?"

"You are mistaken. I have not the slightest desire —"

"Do you know that it was he who compelled Vice-chancellor Wind, as well as Scheele, Vinding, and Justice Lasson, three of my judges, not to sentence me to death? And you would have me hear him calumniated, and not defend him! Yes, that is what he did for me, and yet I had always done him more harm than good; for I am like you, vile and wicked."

The noble Levin was strangely moved by this singular interview. The object alike of the most direct insults and the sincerest praise, he knew not how to take such rough compliments and such flattering abuse. He was shocked and touched. Now he wanted to get into a passion, and now to thank Schumacker. Present and yet unknown, he loved to hear the fierce Schumacker defend in him, and against him, a friend and an absent man; only he would have preferred that his advocate should put a trifle less bitterness and acrimony into his panegyric. But in his innermost heart the exaggerated praise bestowed on Captain Levin pleased him even more than the insults addressed to the governor of Throndhjem wounded him. Fixing his kindly gaze upon the favorite in disgrace, he allowed him to vent his gratitude and his wrath; until at last, after a prolonged invective against human ingratitude, he sank exhausted upon an arm-chair, into the trembling Ethel's arms, saying in a melancholy voice: "Oh, men! what have I done that I should be forced to know you?"

The general had not yet been able to broach the important topic of his visit to Munkholm. All his reluctance to torment the captive by a series of questions, revived; to his pity

and emotion were added two powerful motives: Schumacker's present state of agitation made it improbable that he could answer satisfactorily; and, moreover, on considering the affair more closely, it did not seem to the trusting Levin that such a man could be a conspirator. Still, how could he leave Throndhjem without examining Schumacker? This disagreeable necessity of his position as governor once more overcame all his scruples, and he began as follows, softening his voice as much as possible: "Pray, calm your excitement, Count Schumacker."

This compromise struck the good governor as a happy inspiration, well fitted to reconcile the respect due to the sentence pronounced against him, with a proper regard for the prisoner's misfortune, as it combined his noble title and his humble cognomen. He added: "It is my painful duty —"

"First," interrupted the prisoner, "allow me, Governor, to return to a subject which interests me far more than anything that your Excellency can have to say to me. You assured me just now that that madcap Levin had been rewarded for his services. I am most anxious to know in what way."

"His Majesty, my lord Griffenfeld, raised Levin to the rank of general, and for more than twenty years the foolish fellow has grown old in peace, honored with this military dignity and the favor of his king."

Schumacker's head drooped.

"Yes; that foolish Levin, who cared so little whether he ever lived to be more than a captain, will die a general; and the wise Schumacker, who expected to die Lord Chancellor, grows old a prisoner of State."

As he uttered these words, he hid his face in his hands and heaved a deep sigh. Ethel, who understood nothing of the conversation, save that it distressed her father, instantly strove to divert him.

"Look yonder, father, to the north; I see a gleam of light which I never noticed before."

In fact, the night, which had now closed in, revealed a faint and distant light upon the horizon, apparently coming

from some far-off mountain. But Schumacker's mind and eye were not, like those of Ethel, ever bent on the north; therefore he made no reply. The general alone was struck by the young girl's remark.

"It may be," thought he, "a fire kindled by the rebels;" and this idea forcibly reminding him of the purpose of his visit, he thus addressed the prisoner: "Mr. Griffenfeld, I am sorry to distress you, but you must allow me —"

"I understand you, Governor; it is not enough to spend my days in this dungeon, to lead a lonely, disgraced existence, to have nothing left but bitter memories of past grandeur and power, you must also intrude upon my solitude, gaze upon my sorrow, and enjoy my misfortune. Since that noble Levin de Knud, whom some of your outward features recall to me, is a general like yourself, why was not he permitted to fill your post; for he would never, I swear, Sir Governor, have come to torture a miserable prisoner."

During the course of this strange interview the general had more than once been on the point of revealing himself, that he might bring it to a close. This indirect reproach made it impossible; it accorded so well with his secret feelings that it almost made him feel ashamed of himself. Still, he tried to answer Schumacker's injurious charge. Strange to say, from their mere difference of character, the two men had mutually changed their position; the judge was in some sort obliged to justify himself to the prisoner.

"But," said the general, "if his duty compelled him, do not doubt that Levin de Knud —"

"I do doubt it, noble Governor," exclaimed Schumacker; "do not doubt in your turn that he would have rejected, with all the generous indignation of his soul, the office of spy, or of increasing the agony of a wretched prisoner! No, I know him better than you; he would never have accepted the duties of an executioner. Now, General, I am at your service; do what you consider your duty. What does your Excellency require of me?"

And the old minister fixed his haughty gaze upon the gov-

ernor, all whose resolution was gone. His first reluctance had returned, and was not to be overcome.

"He is right," thought he; "why should I torture an unfortunate man upon mere suspicion? Let some one else undertake the task!"

The effect of these reflections was prompt; he walked up to the astonished Schumacker and pressed his hand. Then he hurriedly left the room, saying: "Count Schumacker, always preserve the same esteem for Levin de Knud."

XXV

Lion (roaring). Oh—
Demetrius. Well roared, lion!
SHAKESPEARE: *Midsummer Night's Dream.*

THE traveller of the present day who visits the snow-clad mountains which surround Lake Miösen like a white girdle, will scarcely find a vestige of what Norwegians of the seventeenth century knew as Arbar ruin. No one was ever able to decide the architectural period or the purpose for which this ruin, if we may give it the name, was built. As you left the forest which covered the southern shore of the lake, after climbing a slope crowned with here and there a fragment of wall or a bit of masonry once a tower, you reached an arched opening leading into the side of the mountain. This entrance, now completely closed by landslips, led into a species of gallery cut in the living rock, and piercing the mountain from side to side.

This tunnel, dimly lighted by conical air-holes made in the arched roof at regular intervals, ended in an oval hall in part excavated from the rock, and terminating in a cyclopean stone wall. Around this hall, in deep niches, were rude images carved from granite. Some of these mysterious figures, which had fallen from their pedestals, lay heaped in

confusion on the ground with other shapeless rubbish, covered with grass and weeds, among which crawled lizards, spiders, and all the hideous vermin born of damp earth and ruins.

Daylight penetrated to this place only through a door opposite the mouth of the gallery. This door, viewed in a certain light, was seen to be of pointed construction, of no especial date, and evidently the work of the architect's whim.

This door might as well have been styled a window, although it was on a level with the ground, for it opened upon a fearful precipice; and it was impossible to imagine whither a short flight of stairs which overhung the abyss could possibly lead.

The hall formed the interior of a huge turret which from a distance, seen from the other side of the precipice, looked like any high mountain peak. It stood alone, and, as has already been said, no one knew to what sort of structure it had belonged. Above it, however, upon a plateau inaccessible even to the boldest hunter, was a mass of masonry which might be taken, being so remote, either for a rounded rock or for the remains of a colossal arch. This turret and crumbling arch were known to the peasants as Arbar ruin, the origin of the name being fully as obscure as that of the buildings themselves.

On a stone in the centre of this oval hall sat a little man dressed in the skins of wild beasts, whom he have already had occasion to mention several times in the course of our story.

His back was turned to the light, or rather to the faint twilight which filtered into the gloomy turret when the sun reached high noon. This light, the strongest natural light which ever entered the tower, was not sufficient to reveal the nature of the object over which the little man was stooping. An occasional muffled groan was heard, and it seemed to proceed from this object, judging by the feeble movement which it now and then made. Sometimes the little man straightened himself, and raised to his lips a cup, by its form apparently

a human skull, filled with steaming liquid of some indistinguishable hue, and drank deep draughts.

All at once he started up.

"I hear steps in the gallery, I believe; can it be the chancellor of the two kingdoms already?"

These words were followed by a horrible burst of laughter ending in a savage roar, which met with an instant response in a howl from the gallery.

"Oh, ho!" rejoined the lord of Arbar ruin; "it is not a man. But it is an enemy all the same; it is a wolf."

In fact, a huge wolf suddenly emerged from the vaulted gallery, paused a moment, then advanced stealthily toward the man, crouching to the ground and fixing upon him burning eyes which gleamed through the darkness. The man stood with folded arms, and watched him.

"Ah! 'tis the old gray wolf,— the oldest wolf in Miösen woods! Good-morning, wolf; your eyes glitter; you are hungry, and the smell of dead bodies attracts you. You too shall soon attract other hungry wolves. Welcome, wolf of Miösen; I have always longed to make your acquaintance. You are so old that they say you cannot die; they will not say so to-morrow."

The animal answered with a frightful yell, sprang back, and then bounded upon the little man.

He did not budge an inch. As quick as a flash, with his right arm he grasped the body of the wolf, which, standing on two legs before him, had thrown his forepaws upon his shoulders; with his left hand he guarded his face from the gaping jaws of his enemy, seizing it by the throat with such force that the creature, compelled to raise his head, could scarcely utter a sound.

"Wolf of Miösen," said the triumphant man, "you tear my jerkin, but your skin shall replace it."

As he mingled with these words of victory a few words in a strange jargon, a convulsive movement made by the dying wolf caused him to stumble upon the stones which were thickly strewn over the floor. The two fell together, and

the roars of the man were blended with the howls of the beast.

Obliged in his fall to relax his grasp of the wolf's throat, the man felt the sharp teeth buried in his shoulder, when, as they rolled over one another, the two combatants struck against an enormous shaggy white body lying in the darkest corner of the room. It was a bear, who waked from his heavy sleep with a growl.

No sooner were the drowsy eyes of this new-comer opened wide enough to see the fight, then he rushed furiously, not upon the man, but upon the wolf, just then victorious in his turn, seized him violently by the back, and thus freed the human combatant.

This latter, far from showing any gratitude for so great a service, rose, covered with blood, and springing upon the bear, gave him a vigorous kick, such as a master might bestow on a dog guilty of some misdemeanor.

"Friend, who called you? Why do you meddle?"

These words were interspersed with furious ejaculations and gnashing of teeth.

"Begone!" he added with a roar.

The bear, who had received at one and the same time a kick from the man and a bite from the wolf, uttered a plaintive remonstrance; then, hanging his great head, he released the famished beast, who hurled himself upon the man with fresh fury.

While the struggle was renewed, the rebuffed bear went back to his couch, sat gravely down, and gazed indifferently at the two raging adversaries, preserving the utmost silence, and rubbing first one fore-paw and then the other across the tip of his white nose.

But the small man, as the leader of the Miösen wolves returned to the charge, seized his bloody snout; then, by an unparalleled exertion requiring both strength and skill, he managed to clasp his entire jaw in one hand. The wolf struggled frantically with rage and pain; foam dropped from his compressed lips, and his eyes, distended with rage,

seemed starting from their sockets. Of the two foes, the one whose bones were shattered by sharp teeth, whose flesh was rent by cruel claws, was not the man but the wild beast; the one whose howl was most savage, whose expression was most fierce, was not the animal but the man.

Finally, the latter, collecting all his strength, exhausted by the aged wolf's prolonged resistance, squeezed his muzzle in both hands with such force that blood gushed from the creature's nose and mouth; his flaming eyes grew dim, and half closed; he tottered, and fell lifeless at his victor's feet. The feeble twitching of his tail and the convulsive and occasional shudder which shook his entire frame, alone showed that he was not yet quite dead.

All at once a final quiver ran through the expiring frame, and all signs of life ceased.

"There you lie, dead, old wolf," said the little man, kicking him contemptuously. "Did you think that you could live on after you had encountered me? You will hasten no more with muffled step across the snow, following the scent and the track of your prey; you are food for wolves or vultures now yourself; you have devoured many a lost traveller on the shores of Miösen during your long life of murder and carnage; now you yourself are dead, you will eat no more men. 'Tis a pity!"

He took up a sharp stone, crouched beside the wolf's warm, palpitating body, broke the limbs at their joints, severed the head from the shoulders, slit the skin from head to heel, stripped it off, as he might remove his own waistcoat, and in the twinkling of an eye nothing was left of the much-dreaded wolf of Miösen but a bare and bleeding carcass. He flung his trophy over his shoulders, bruised with bites, turning inside out the skin, still reeking and stained with long streaks of blood.

"Needs must," he muttered, "dress in the skins of beasts; that of a man is too thin to keep out the cold."

As he thus talked to himself, more hideous than ever beneath his loathsome burden, the bear, tired no doubt of in-

action, furtively approached the other object lying in the shadow, to which we referred in the beginning of this chapter, and a crunching of bones, mingled with faint, agonized moans, soon rose from this gloomy quarter of the hall. The small man turned.

"Friend!" cried he in threatening tones; "ah, you good-for-nothing Friend! Here, come here!"

And picking up a huge stone, he hurled it at the monster's head. The creature, stunned by the blow, reluctantly tore himself from his prey, and crawled, licking his bloody chaps, to fall panting at the little man's feet, lifting his huge head and wriggling, as if to ask pardon for his rash act.

Then ensued between the two monsters — for we may well apply that name to the dweller in Arbar ruin — an exchange of significant growls. Those of the man expressed anger and authority; those of the bear, entreaty and submission.

"There," said the man at last, pointing with his crooked finger to the flayed body of the wolf, "there is your victim; leave mine to me."

The bear, after smelling at the wolf's carcass, shook his head discontentedly, and turned his eye toward the man who seemed to be his master.

"I understand," said the latter; "that is too dead for you, while there is still life in the other. You are refined in your pleasures, Friend,— quite as much so as a man; you like to have your food retain its life until the instant when you tear it limb from limb; you love to feel the flesh expire beneath your teeth; you enjoy nothing unless it suffers. We are alike; for I am not a man, Friend; I am superior to that wretched race; I am a wild beast like you. How I wish that you could speak to me, comrade Friend, to tell me whether my joy equals that which thrills your bearish soul when you devour a man's heart. But no; I should be loath to hear you speak, lest your voice should recall to me the human voice. Yes, growl at my feet with that growl which makes the stray goatherd tremble among the mountains; it pleases me as the voice of a friend, because it proclaims you his

enemy. Look up, Friend, look up at me; lick my hands with that tongue which has drunk so often of human blood. Your teeth are white like mine: it is no fault of ours if they be not red as a new-made wound; but blood washes away blood. More than once from the depths of some dark cave I have seen the maidens of Kiölen or Oëlmœ bathe their bare feet in some mountain torrent, singing the while in sweet tones; but I prefer your hairy snout and your hoarse cries to those melodious voices and satin-smooth faces; for they terrify mankind."

As he said this, he sat down and yielded his hand to the caresses of the monster, who, rolling on his back at his master's feet, lavished all sorts of endearments upon him, like a spaniel displaying his pretty tricks before the sofa of his mistress.

Stranger yet was the intelligent attention with which he seemed to follow his master's words. The singular monosyllables with which the latter interspersed them seemed particularly intelligible to his understanding; and he showed his comprehension by rearing his head suddenly, or by a vague rumbling noise in the back of his throat.

"Men say that I shun them," resumed the little man; "but it is they that shun me; they do through fear what I should do through hate. Still, you know, Friend, that I am always glad to come across a man when I am hungry or thirsty."

All at once he saw a red glow start into life in the depths of the gallery, growing brighter by degrees and faintly tinting the damp old walls.

"Here comes one now. Talk of the Devil and you see his horns. Hullo, Friend!" he added, turning to the bear; "hullo! get up!"

The animal instantly rose.

"Come, I must reward your obedience by gratifying your appetite."

With these words, the man stooped toward the object lying on the ground.

The cracking of bones broken by a hatchet was heard; but no sigh or groan was now blended with it.

"It seems," muttered the small man, "that there are but two of us left alive in Arbar hall. There, good Friend, finish the feast which you began."

He flung toward the aforementioned outer door what he had detached from the object stretched at his feet. The bear threw himself upon his prey so rapidly that the swiftest eye could not have been sure that the fragment was indeed a human arm, clad in a bit of green stuff of the same shade as the uniform worn by the Munkholm musketeers.

"Some one is coming," said the little man, keeping his eye on the light, which was steadily advancing. "Comrade Friend, leave me alone for a moment. Ho there! Away with you!"

Th obedient beast rushed to the door, backed down the steps outside, and disappeared, bearing off his disgusting booty with a satisfied howl.

At the same instant a tall man appeared at the mouth of the tunnel, whose sinuous depths still reflected a dim light. He was wrapped in a long brown cloak, and carried a dark-lantern, which he turned full on the small man's face.

The latter, still seated on his stone with folded arms, exclaimed: "Ill befall you, you who come hither guided by an idea, and not by instinct!"

But the stranger, making no reply, seemed studying him carefully.

"Look at me," he continued, raising his head; "an hour hence you may have no voice left with which to boast that you have seen me."

The new-comer, moving his light up and down the little man's person, seemed even more surprised than frightened.

"Well, what astonishes you so much?" rejoined the little man, with a laugh like the breaking of bones. "I have legs and arms like your own; only my limbs will not like yours serve to feed wildcats and crows!"

The stranger at length replied, in a low but confident voice,

as if he only feared being heard from without: "Hear me; I come not as an enemy, but as a friend."

The other interrupted, "Then why did you not strip off your human form?"

"It is my purpose to do you a service, if you be he whom I seek."

"You mean, to ask a service. Man, you waste your breath. I can do no service to any save those who are weary of life."

"By your words," replied the stranger, "I am sure that you are the man I want; but your stature — Hans of Iceland is a giant. You cannot be he."

"You are the first who ever doubted it to my face."

"What! can it be?" And the stranger approached the little man. "But I always heard that Hans of Iceland was of colossal height."

"Add my renown to my height, and you will see that I am taller than Mount Hecla."

"Indeed! Tell me, I pray, are you really Hans, a native of Klipstadur in Iceland?"

"It is not in words that I should answer that question," said the little man, rising; and the look which he cast at the rash stranger made him start back several paces.

"Confine yourself, I beg, to answering it by that glance," he replied in a voice of entreaty, casting a look toward the exit, which showed his regret that he had ever entered; "I came here in your interests alone."

Upon entering the hall, the new-comer, having but a glimpse of the person whom he accosted, had retained his self-possession; but when the master of Arbar rose, with his tigerish visage, his thick-set limbs, his bloody shoulders, but half concealed by a skin still green, his huge hands armed with claws, and his fiery eyes, the bold stranger shuddered, like an ignorant traveller who thinks he is handling an eel and feels the sting of a viper.

"My interests?" repeated the monster. "Have you come to tell me of some spring which I may poison, some village I may burn, or some Munkholm musketeer I may slaughter?"

"Perhaps. Listen: The miners of Norway are in a state of revolt. You know what disaster follows in the train of revolt."

"Yes,— murder, rape, sacrilege, fire, and pillage."

"All these I offer you."

The little man laughed.

"I should not wait for you to offer them."

The brutal sneer accompanying these words made the stranger again shudder. He went on, however:—

"In the name of the miners, I offer you the command of the insurrection."

The small man was silent for an instant. All at once his dark countenance assumed an expression of infernal malice.

"Does the offer really come from them?" said he.

This question seemed to embarrass the new-comer; but as he was sure that he was unknown to his terrible interlocutor, he readily recovered himself.

"Why have the miners rebelled?"

"To throw off the burden of the royal protectorate."

"Only for that?" replied the other in the same mocking tone.

"They also wish to free the prisoner of Munkholm."

"Is this the sole purpose of the movement?" repeated the small man in a voice which confused the stranger.

"I know of no other," he stammered.

"Oh, you know of no other!"

These words were pronounced in the same sarcastic tone. The stranger, to hide the embarrassment which they caused him, hastily drew from beneath his cloak a heavy purse which he flung at the monster's feet.

"Here is your pay as commander-in-chief."

The small man spurned the purse with his foot.

"I will not have it. Do you imagine that if I wanted your gold or your blood I should wait for your permission to gratify my desire?"

The stranger made a gesture of surprise, almost of terror.

"It is a present from the royal miners."

"I will not have it, I tell you. Gold is useless to me. Men will sell their soul, but they do not sell their life. That must be taken by force."

"Then I may tell the miners that the terrible Hans of Iceland accepts their leadership, but not their gold?"

"I do not accept it."

These words, uttered in curt tones, seemed to strike the pretended envoy from the rebellious miners very unpleasantly.

"What?" he asked.

"No!" repeated the other.

"You refuse to take part in an expedition which presents so many advantages?"

"I am quite able to pillage farms, lay waste villages, and massacre peasants or soldiers, single-handed."

"But consider that by accepting the offer of the miners you are assured of a free pardon."

"Does this offer also come from the miners?" asked the other, with a laugh.

"I will not disguise from you the fact," replied the stranger, with an air of mystery, "that it comes from an important personage who is deeply interested in the insurrection."

"And is this important personage so sure that he will himself escape hanging?"

"If you knew who he is, you would not shake your head so significantly."

"Indeed! Well, who is he?"

"I may not tell you."

The small man stepped forward and clapped the stranger on the shoulder, still with the same sardonic sneer.

"Shall I tell *you?*"

The man wrapped in the cloak gave a start; it was a start of both fright and wounded pride. He was prepared for neither the monster's abrupt proposal, nor for his savage familiarity.

"I am only laughing at you," added the brigand. "You

little guess that I know all. This important personage is the Lord High Chancellor of Norway and Denmark; and you yourself are the Lord High Chancellor of Norway and Denmark."

It was indeed he. On reaching Arbar ruin, toward which we left him journeying with Musdœmon, he had been unwilling to intrust to any one else the task of securing the brigand, by whom he was far from supposing himself known and expected. Never, even after years had elapsed, did Count d'Ahlefeld, with all his power and all his diplomacy, discover how Hans of Iceland acquired his information. Was it through Musdœmon's treachery? True, it was Musdœmon who suggested to the noble count that it would be well to see the brigand in person; but what profit could he derive from his perfidy? Had the bandit captured upon some one of his numerous victims, papers relating to the chancellor's schemes? But Frederic d'Ahlefeld was, with the sole exception of Musdœmon, the only living being acquainted with his father's plans, and frivolous as he was, he was not quite so senseless as to expose such a secret. Moreover, he was in garrison at Munkholm, at least so the chancellor supposed. Those who read the close of this scene, without being any better able to solve the problem than was Count d'Ahlefeld, will see how much truth there was in this latter hypothesis.

One of Count d'Ahlefeld's most marked characteristics was his great presence of mind. When he heard himself so abruptly named, he could not repress an exclamation of surprise; but in the twinkling of an eye, his pale, proud features lost their expression of fear and astonishment, and recovered their usual calm composure.

"Well, yes," said he, "I will be frank with you; I am indeed the chancellor. But I hope you will be equally frank with me."

A burst of laughter interrupted him.

"Have I waited to be urged to tell you my name, or to tell you your own?"

"Tell me with the same sincerity how you found me out?"

"Have you never heard that Hans of Iceland can see through mountains?"

The count tried to insist.

"Consider me as a friend."

"Your hand, Count d'Ahlefeld," said the little man, with brutal familiarity. Then he stared the minister in the face, exclaiming: "Could our two souls escape from our bodies at this moment, I fancy that Satan would hesitate to decide which of the two belonged to the monster."

The haughty noble bit his lip; but between his fear of the robber and his desire to secure him as his tool, he managed to disguise his resentment.

"Do not imperil your own interests; accept the command of the rebellion, and trust to my gratitude."

"Chancellor of Norway, you count on the success of your schemes, like an old woman who dreams of the gown which she will spin from stolen hemp, while the cat's claws tangle her spindle."

"Reflect once more, before you reject my offers."

"Once more, I, the brigand, say to you, Lord Chancellor of both kingdoms, No!"

"I expected a different answer, after the eminent service which you have already rendered me."

"What service?" asked the robber.

"Was it not you who murdered Captain Dispolsen?" replied the chancellor.

"That may be, Count d'Ahlefeld; I do not know him. Who is he?"

"What! did not the iron casket which he had in charge fall to your share?"

This question seemed to sharpen the robber's memory.

"Stay!" said he; "I do remember that man and his iron casket. It was on Urchtal Sands."

"At least," rejoined the chancellor, "if you could restore that casket to me, my gratitude would be unbounded. Tell me what has become of that casket, for I am sure it is in your possession."

The noble minister laid such stress upon this request that the brigand was struck by it.

"So, then, that iron casket is of the utmost importance to your Grace, my Lord Chancellor?"

"Yes."

"What shall my reward be if I tell you where it is?"

"Anything that you may desire, my dear Hans."

"Well, I will not tell you."

"Pooh! you are joking! Think what a service you can do me."

"That is exactly what I am thinking."

"I will insure you a vast fortune; I will ask your pardon from the king."

"You had better beg your own from me," said the bandit. "Look you, Lord Chancellor of Norway and Denmark, the tiger does not devour the hyena. I will permit you to leave my presence with your life, because you are a scoundrel, and every instant that you live, every thought of your heart, causes fresh misery for mankind and fresh crime for yourself. But return not, or I may teach you that my hatred spares no one, not even a villain. As for your captain, do not flatter yourself that it was on your account I slaughtered him; it was his uniform which doomed him, as it did this other wretch, whom I did not murder to gratify you either, I assure you."

With these words, he seized the noble count by the arm and dragged him toward the body lying in the shadow. As he finished his protestations, the light from the lantern fell upon this object. It was a mutilated corpse, and was indeed dressed in the uniform of an officer of the Munkholm Musketeers. The chancellor approached it with a sense of horror. All at once his eye rested on the pallid, blood-stained face of the dead. The livid, half-parted lips, the bristling hair, the discolored cheeks, and lustreless eyes could not disguise that countenance from him. He uttered a fearful shriek: "My God! Frederic! My son!"

Doubt not that hearts seemingly the most hardened still

conceal in their innermost recesses some trace of affection unknown even to themselves, apparently hidden by vice and passion, like a mysterious witness and a future avenger. It may be said to exist, that it may some day make crime acquainted with grief. It silently bides its time. The wicked man bears it in his bosom and is unconscious of it, because no ordinary affection is sufficient to pierce the thick crust of selfishness and iniquity which covers it; but let one of the rare and genuine sorrows of life appear unawares, and it plunges a sharp-edged sword into the dark regions of that soul and probes its lowest depths. Then the unknown sentiment of love is revealed to the wretched criminal, all the more violent for its long repression, all the more painful from his lack of sensibility, because the sting of misfortune was forced to stab the heart more deeply in order to reach it. Nature wakes and casts aside her chains; she delivers the miscreant to unwonted despair, to unheard-of torments; he feels, compressed into a single instant, all the sufferings which he has defied for years. The most various pangs rend him simultaneously. His heart, burdened by dull amazement, revolts to find itself a prey to convulsive agony. He seems to experience the pains of hell while still in this life, and something beyond despair is made clear to him.

Count d'Ahlefeld loved his son without knowing it. We say his son, because, being unaware of his wife's guilt, as such he regarded Frederic, the direct heir to his name. Supposing him still at Munkholm, he was far from prepared to meet him in Arbar tower, and to find him dead! But there he lay, bruised and bleeding; it was he, impossible to doubt it. His emotions may be imagined when a realizing sense of his love for his son unexpectedly pierced his soul, together with the assurance that he was lost to him forever. All the sensations so inadequately described in these pages burst upon his heart at once like so many claps of thunder. Stunned, as it were, by surprise, terror, and despair, he cast himself upon the ground, and wrung his hands, repeating in woful accents: "My son! my son!"

The brigand laughed. It was horrible to hear such laughter mingled with the groans of a father looking upon the dead body of his son.

"By my ancestor Ingulf! you may call, Count d'Ahlefeld, but you cannot wake him."

All at once his cruel face darkened, and he said in a melancholy voice: "Weep for your son, if you will; I avenge mine."

The sound of footsteps hurrying along the gallery interrupted the words upon his lips; and as he turned in surprise, four tall men, with drawn swords, rushed into the room; a fifth, short and stout, followed, bearing a torch in one hand and a sword in the other. He was wrapped in a brown cloak, like that worn by the chancellor.

"My lord," he exclaimed, "we heard your voice, and hastened to your assistance."

The reader has doubtless recognized Musdœmon and the four armed retainers who formed the count's escort.

As the torchlight filled the room with its ruddy glow, the five new-comers paused in horror-stricken dismay; and it was indeed an awful sight. On the one hand, the bloody remains of the wolf, the disfigured body of the young officer; on the other, the father, with his wild eyes and frantic shrieks; and beside him the fearful monster, turning on his assailants a hideous front, indicative of dauntless surprise.

At the sight of this unlooked-for reinforcement the idea of vengeance took possession of the count, and roused him from his despair.

"Death to that brigand!" he cried, drawing his sword; "he has murdered my son. Kill him! kill him!"

"Has he murdered Mr. Frederic?" said Musdœmon; and the torch in his hand did not reveal the slightest change in his countenance.

"Kill him! kill him!" repeated the frantic count.

And the whole six rushed upon the robber. He, surprised by this sudden attack, retreated toward the opening which

overhung the precipice, with a fierce roar, expressive rather of rage than fear.

Six swords were directed against him, and his eyes flamed forth greater fury, while his features wore a more menacing expression than those of any of his aggressors. He had grasped his stone axe, and, forced by the number of his assailants to confine himself to defensive action, whirled it round and round in his hand so rapidly that the circle described, covered him like a shield. A myriad sparks flashed from the point of his assailants' swords as they clashed against the edge of the hatchet; but not a single blade touched him. And yet, exhausted by his recent battle with the wolf, he lost ground imperceptibly, and soon found himself driven close against the door opening upon the abyss.

"Courage, friends!" shouted the count; "let us hurl the monster over this precipice."

"Before I fall, the stars themselves shall fall," replied the brigand.

But the aggressors redoubled their ardor and their assurance as they saw that the small man was compelled to descend one step of the flight which overhung the abyss.

"Good! one effort more!" cried the lord chancellor; "he needs must fall; push your advantage! Wretch, you have committed your last crime. Courage, men!"

While with his right hand he continued his fearful evolutions with the axe, the brigand, without deigning a reply, with his left hand grasped a horn which hung at his belt, and raising it to his lips, again and again blew a long, hoarse blast, which was answered suddenly by a roar from the gulf beneath.

A few instants later, as the count and his followers, still pressing the little man hard, rejoiced that they had driven him down a second step, the huge head of a white bear appeared at the broken end of the staircase. Struck dumb with amazement and fright, they shrank back. The bear climbed the stairs with a lumbering gait, showing his bloody jaws and sharp teeth as he did so.

"Thanks, good Friend!" cried the brigand. And taking advantage of his enemy's surprise, he sprang upon the back of his bear, who slowly descended the stairs backwards, still keeping his threatening front turned upon his master's foes.

Soon, recovering from their first astonishment, they beheld the bear, carrying the brigand beyond their reach, descend into the abyss, probably in the same way that he ascended, by clinging to the trunks of trees and to projecting rocks. They tried to roll great bowlders down upon him; but before they could detach a single one of those ancient granite fragments which had slumbered there so long, the brigand and his strange steed had vanished in a cave.

XXVI

No, no, laugh no more. Look you, that which I thought so humorous has its serious side as well, a very serious side, like everything in this world! Believe me, that word, chance, is blasphemy; nothing beneath the sun is the work of chance; and do you not see herein the purpose marked out by Providence? — Lessing: *Emilia Galotti.*

YES, a deep design often lies at the root of what men call chance. There seems to be a mysterious hand which marks the cause and purpose of events. We inveigh against fickle fortune, against the strange accidents of our lot, and lo! chaos is made clear by a fearful flash of lightning or a marvellous beam of light, and human wisdom is humbled by the great lessons of fate.

If, for instance, when Frederic d'Ahlefeld displayed his magnificent attire, his foolish complacency, and his presumptuous pride, in some sumptuous apartment, to the ladies of Copenhagen; if some man, endowed with the gift of second sight, had troubled his frivolous thoughts by gloomy revelations; if he had told him that one day the brilliant uniform of which he boasted should cause his death; that a monster in human shape should drink his blood as greedily as he, care-

less epicure that he was, drank the wines of France and Bohemia; that the locks upon which he could not lavish too many essences and perfumes should sweep the dust of a cave haunted by wild beasts; that the arm which he so gracefully offered to the fair ladies of Charlottenburg should be flung to a bear like a half-gnawed chicken-bone,— how would Frederic have answered these dismal prophecies? With a laugh and a pirouette; and, more frightful still, most sensible men would have applauded his reckless conduct.

Let us consider his destiny more closely. Is it not strange to find that the crime of Count and Countess d'Ahlefeld met with such fitting punishment? They wove an infamous plot against the daughter of a prisoner; this unfortunate girl by a mere chance found a protector, who saw fit to remove their son, charged by them to carry out their abominable scheme. This son, their only hope, was sent far from the scene of his purposed villainy; and hardly had he reached his destination, when another avenging chance caused his death. Thus in their attempt to bring dishonor upon an innocent yet detested young girl, they plunged their own guilty yet adored son into the oblivion of the grave. The wretched pair were made miserable by their own hands.

XXVII

Ah, here comes our lovely countess! Forgive me, Madam, if I may not have the honor of a visit from you to-day. I am busy. Another time, dear Countess, another time; but to-day I will not detain you longer.— *The Prince and Orsina.*

THE day after his visit to Munkholm, the governor of Throndhjem ordered his travelling carriage to be made ready very early in the morning, hoping to start off before Countess d'Ahlefeld was awake; but we have already observed that her slumbers were light.

The general had just signed his final instructions to the

bishop, into whose hands the government was to be committed during his absence. He rose, put on his fur-lined coat, and was about to leave the room, when the usher announced the chancellor's wife.

This piece of ill luck confused the old soldier, who could laugh at the fiery rain of a hundred guns, but not at the artifices of a woman. However, he took leave of the wicked creature with a tolerably good grace, and disguised his annoyance until she whispered in his ear with that crafty look which would fain seem confidential, "Well, noble General, what did he say?"

"Who,— Poël? He said that the carriage was ready."

"I mean the prisoner of Munkholm, General."

"Oh!"

"Did he answer your questions satisfactorily?"

"Why — Yes, to be sure, Countess," said the much embarrassed governor.

"Did you find proofs that he was concerned in the conspiracy among the miners?"

The general involuntarily exclaimed, "Noble lady, he is innocent."

He stopped short, for he knew that he had uttered the conviction of his heart, not of his head.

"He is innocent!" repeated the countess, with a look of consternation and incredulity; for she trembled lest Schumacker had really proved to the governor the innocence which it was so much to the chancellor's interest to deny.

The governor had had time to reflect; he answered the persistent gentlewoman in a tone which quieted her fears, for it revealed his doubt and anxiety.

"Innocent — Yes, if you choose —"

"If I choose, General!" And the wicked woman laughed aloud.

Her laughter offended the governor, who said, "By your leave, Countess, I will report my interview with the ex-chancellor to the viceroy." Then he bowed low, and went down to the courtyard, where his carriage awaited him.

"Yes," said Countess d'Ahlefeld, as she returned to her rooms; "go, my knight-errant, for your absence rids us of the protector of our enemies. Go; for your departure is the signal for my Frederic's return. I wonder how you dared to send the handsomest young man in Copenhagen to those horrid mountains! Luckily, it will be easy enough now for me to have him recalled."

At this thought she turned to her favorite attendant.

"Lisbeth, my dear, send to Bergen for two dozen of those little combs which our elegant young men are wearing in their hair, inquire for the famous Scudéry's last novel, and see that my dear Frederic's monkey is washed in rose-water every morning, without fail."

"What! my gracious mistress," asked Lisbeth, "is there a chance that Mr. Frederic will come back?"

"Yes, indeed; and we must do everything that he wishes, so that he may be glad to see me again. I must arrange a surprise for him."

Poor mother!

XXVIII

Bernard hurries along the shores of the Arlanza. He is like a lion rushing from his den, seeking the hunters, and resolved to conquer them or die. The brave and resolute Spaniard sets forth. With a quick step, in his hand a heavy spear, in which he puts his trust, Bernard traverses the ruins of Arlanza.— *Old Spanish Romance.*

ON descending from the tower from whose summit he had seen Munkholm light, Ordener looked in every direction, until he was exhausted, for his poor guide, Benignus Spiagudry. He called him repeatedly, but only echo answered. Surprised but not alarmed by this inexplicable disappearance, he attributed it to some panic which had seized upon the timid keeper, and after generously blaming himself for having left him, even for a few moments, he decided to spend the night upon the cliff, in order to give him time to

return. Then he ate something, and wrapping himself in his mantle, laid down by the dying embers, kissed Ethel's ringlet, and soon fell asleep; for an anxious heart cannot keep awake a man whose conscience is clear.

At sunrise he rose, but found no trace of Spiagudry except his wallet and cloak, which had been left in the tower, showing that his flight had been very hasty. Then, despairing of his return, at least to Oëlmœ Cliff, Ordener resolved to set off without him, for it was on the next day that he hoped to meet Hans of Iceland at Walderhog.

It has been stated in the earlier chapters of this story that Ordener had accustomed himself to the hardships incident to a roving and adventurous life. Having already travelled through northern Norway several times, he did not need a guide, now that he knew where to find the robber. He accordingly turned his lonely steps toward the northwest, no longer having Benignus Spiagudry at his side to tell him just how much quartz or spar each hill contained, what traditions were connected with every ruin, and whether this or that gaping chasm was caused by an ancient flood or by some volcanic action. He walked a whole day through those mountains which, proceeding at intervals like foot-hills from the principal chain traversing the length of Norway, slope gradually down to the sea; so that the coast of that country is a mere succession of promontories and fjords, while inland it is nothing but a series of mountains and valleys, a strange conformation, which has caused Norway to be compared to the skeleton of a great fish.

It was no easy matter to travel in such a region. Sometimes he was forced to follow the stony bed of a dry stream, sometimes to cross, by an unsteady bridge made of a tree-trunk, over a road which torrents born but the day before had chosen for their bed.

Sometimes, too, Ordener would journey for hours without seeing any sign of the presence of man in these wild places, save an occasional glimpse of the sails of a wind-mill upon the top of a hill, or the sound of a distant forge, whose smoke

blew hither and thither like a black plume, as the wind shifted this way and that.

Now and again he met a peasant mounted on a little gray pony, its head down, and scarcely more untamed than its master; or a dealer in furs and skins, seated in his sledge, drawn by reindeer, a long rope fastened behind, the end covered with knots, meant to frighten away wolves, as it rebounded from the pebbles in the road.

If Ordener asked this trader the way to Walderhog cave, the travelling merchant, familiar only with the names and positions of the places to which his business took him, would answer indifferently: "Keep to the northwest till you come to Hervalyn village, then cross Dodlysax ravine, and by night you will reach Surb, which is only two miles from Walderhog."

If Ordener put the same question to the peasant, the latter, deeply imbued with the traditions of the country and the fireside tales, would shake his head again and again, and stop his gray horse, as he said: "Walderhog! Walderhog cave! There the stones sing, the dry bones dance, and the demon of Iceland dwells; it cannot be to Walderhog cave that your worship wishes to go?"

"Yes, indeed," Ordener would reply.

"Has your worship lost your mother, or has fire destroyed your farm, or has one of your neighbors stolen your fat pig?"

"No, truly," the young man would answer.

"Then some magician must have cast a spell over your worship's senses."

"My friend, I asked you to tell me the way to Walderhog."

"I am trying to answer your question, sir. Farewell. Keep to the north! I can tell you how to go there, but I do not know how you will get back."

And the peasant would ride off, crossing himself as he went.

To the gloomy monotony of the road was added the inconvenience of a fine, penetrating rain, which took possession of

the sky toward noonday, and increased the difficulties of the way. No song-bird dared venture forth; and Ordener, chilled to the bone beneath his cloak, saw only the goshawk and the falcon hover above his head, or the kingfisher fly up from the reeds of a pond with a fish in its claws, startled by his tread.

It was after dark when the young traveller, after making his way through the forest of aspens and beeches which lies close to Dodlysax ravine, reached the village of Surb, where (as the reader may remember) Spiagudry had asked leave to establish his headquarters. The smell of tar and the charcoal smoke told Ordener that he was approaching a seafaring population. He advanced to the first hut which he could see through the darkness. According to Norwegian custom, the low, narrow entrance was closed by a large, transparent fish-skin, tinged at this moment by the flickering red light of the fire. He knocked on the wooden doorpost, saying,—

"It is a traveller!"

"Come in, come in," answered a voice from within.

At the same instant an eager hand raised the fish-skin, and Ordener was admitted to the cone-shaped home of a Norwegian 'longshore fisherman. It was a sort of circular tent made of wood and earth, in the centre of which blazed a fire, where the purple glow of turf was mixed with the white light of the pine. Beside this fire the fisherman, his wife, and two children dressed in rags were seated at a table set with wooden plates and earthen cups. On the opposite side of the fire was a pile of nets and oars; a couple of reindeer were asleep on a bed of dried leaves and skins, which by its ample size seemed intended also as a resting-place for the family and any guests whom it might please Heaven to send them. It took more than one glance to make out the arrangement of the hut; for a thick, pungent smoke, which found but scanty outlet through a hole in the pointed roof, wrapped everything in a misty but almost impenetrable veil.

As soon as Ordener crossed the threshold, the fisherman and his wife rose, and returned his greeting in a frank and friendly manner. Norwegian peasants welcome travellers

perhaps as much from a lively feeling of curiosity inherent in their nature as from their native inclination to hospitality.

"Sir," said the fisherman, "you must be cold and hungry; here are fire to dry your cloak and excellent bark bread to satisfy your appetite. Afterward your worship may be willing to tell us who you are, where you come from, where you are going, and what stories the gossips relate in your native place."

"Yes, sir," added his wife; "and you might add to that bark bread — which, as my husband says, is excellent — a delicious bit of salt fish, seasoned with whale oil. Sit down, stranger."

"And if your worship does not like Saint Usuph's [1] fare," added the man, "and will have patience for a few moments, I can promise you a splendid piece of venison, or at least a pheasant's wing. We are expecting a visit from the best hunter in the three provinces. Isn't that so, good Maase?"

"Maase," the name which the fisherman gave his wife, is a Norwegian word meaning "sea-gull." The wife did not seem in the least offended, either because it was really her name, or because she took it as a term of endearment.

"The best hunter! I should say so," she answered with great emphasis. "He means my brother, the famous Kennybol. God bless all his undertakings! He has come to spend a few days with us, and you shall drink a mug of good beer with him. He is a traveller like you."

"Many thanks, my kind hostess," said Ordener, with a smile; "but I must be content with your tempting salt fish and a bit of this bark bread. I have not time to wait for your brother, the mighty hunter. I must set off again immediately."

Good Maase, flattered by the stranger's praises of her fish and her brother, and vexed at his hasty departure, exclaimed: "You are very kind, sir. But why should you leave us so soon?"

"I must."

[1] The patron saint of fishermen.

"Must you venture among these mountains at this hour and in such weather?"

"My business is important."

These answers roused the native curiosity of the young man's entertainers as much as they excited their surprise.

The fisherman rose, and said: "You are in the house of Christopher Buldus Braal, fisherman, of the village of Surb."

The woman added: "Maase Kennybol is his wife and servant."

When Norwegian peasants wish to ask a stranger's name in polite style, it is their custom to tell him their own.

Ordener answered: "And I am a traveller, who is neither sure of the name he bears nor of the road he travels."

This strange reply did not seem to satisfy fisher Braal.

"By the crown of Gorman the Old," said he, "I did not suppose there was more than one man in Norway just now who was not sure of his name. I mean the noble Baron Thorwick, who is to change his name, they say, to Count Danneskiold, on account of his famous marriage to the chancellor's daughter. At least, dear Maase, that's the latest news from Throndhjem. I congratulate you, stranger, upon this likeness between you and the son of the viceroy, the great Count Guldenlew."

"As your worship," added the wife, her face beaming with curiosity, "does not seem able to tell us anything about yourself, can you not tell us something about what is going on just now, for instance, something about this wonderful marriage of which my husband speaks?"

"Yes," rejoined her husband, with a self-important air, "that's the very latest news. Within a month the viceroy's son will marry the chancellor's daughter."

"I doubt it," said Ordener.

"You doubt it, sir! I assure you that the thing is certain. I have it on the best authority. The fellow who told me had it from Mr. Poël, the favorite servant of the noble Baron Thorwick,— that is, the noble Count Danneskiold.

Can any storm have troubled the waters within the week? Has this grand match been broken off? "

"I think so," replied the young man, smiling.

"If that is so, sir, I am wrong. Never light the fire to fry the fish before it is in the net. But have they really quarrelled? Who told you so? "

"Nobody," said Ordener. "I merely imagined so."

At this frank confession the fisherman could not help transgressing the laws of Norwegian courtesy by a loud burst of laughter.

"A thousand pardons, sir. But it is easy to see that you are indeed a traveller, and probably a stranger. Do you fancy that things will turn out as you happen to wish, and that the sky will be clear or cloudy at your caprice? "

Here the fisherman, well versed in the affairs of the nation, as all Norse peasants are, began to explain to Ordener why this marriage could not fail to take place: it was essential to the interests of the d'Ahlefeld family; the viceroy could not refuse the king, who desired it; besides, it was said that the future husband and wife were very much in love. In a word, fisher Braal could not doubt that the match would come off; he only wished he was as sure of killing next day that confounded dogfish which infested Master-Bick pond.

Ordener was little inclined to carry on a political discussion with so uncouth a statesman, and was delighted when the arrival of another guest relieved him of all embarrassment.

"It is he; it is my brother! " cried old Maase.

And no less event than the arrival of her brother could have diverted her from the rapt admiration with which she listened to her husband's lengthy discourse.

The latter, while the two children threw themselves noisily upon their uncle's neck, quietly offered him his hand, saying,—

"Welcome, brother."

Then, turning to Ordener: "Sir, this is our brother, the famous hunter Kennybol, from the mountains of Kiölen."

"A hearty greeting to you all," said the mountaineer, tak-

ing off his bearskin cap. "Brother, I've had as bad luck in hunting upon your coast as you would probably have had if you had gone fishing in our mountains. I think I could sooner fill my game-bag if I chased elves and goblins in the misty forests of Queen Mab. Sister Maase, you are the first sea-mew whom I have caught sight of to-day. Here, friends, God keep you! but this wretched grouse is all that the best hunter in the province of Throndhjem has got in a whole day's tramp through the heather in this weather."

With these words he drew from his pouch and laid on the table a white ptarmigan, declaring that it was not worth a shot.

"But," he muttered between his teeth, "my faithful arquebuse, you shall soon hunt far bigger game. If you can bring down no more chamois or elk skins, you shall make holes in green jackets and red jerkins."

These words, but half heard, struck the curious Maase.

"Eh!" asked she; "what did you say, brother?"

"I said that there was always a goblin dancing under a woman's tongue."

"You are right, brother Kennybol," cried the fisherman. "Eve's daughters are all curious, like their mother. Weren't you talking of green jackets?"

"Brother Braal," replied the hunter, with some spirit, "I trust my secrets to no one but my musket, because I am sure that then they will never be repeated."

"There's talk in the village," boldly continued the fisherman, "of a revolt among the miners. Do you know anything about it, brother?"

The mountaineer picked up his cap and pulled it over his eyes, with a sidelong look at the stranger; then he bent toward the fisherman and said in a low, stern tone: "Silence!"

The fisherman shook his head several times.

"Brother Kennybol, the fish may be silent, but it falls into the net all the same."

There was a short pause. The two brothers exchanged meaning glances; the children picked the feathers from the

ptarmigan as it lay on the table; the good wife listened, and hoped to guess more than was actually said; and Ordener studied them all.

"If you have but meagre fare to-day," suddenly observed the hunter, evidently anxious to change the subject, "it shall not be so to-morrow. Brother Braal, catch the king of fish, if you can, for I promise you plenty of bear's grease to dress it."

"Bear's grease!" cried Maase. "Has any one seen a bear in the neighborhood? Patrick, Regner, my boys, I forbid you to leave the house. A bear!"

"Make yourself easy, sister; you will have nothing to fear from him after to-morrow. Yes, it was really a bear that I saw about two miles away from Surb,— a white bear. He seemed to be carrying off a man, or rather an animal. But no, it may have been a goatherd, for goatherds dress in the skins of animals; however, I was not near enough to tell. What amazed me, was that he carried his prey on his back, and not in his teeth."

"Really, brother?"

"Yes; and the creature must have been dead, for it made no attempt to defend itself."

"But," sagely inquired the fisherman, "if it were dead, how did it stay on the bear's back?"

"That's more than I can say. Never mind; it shall be the bear's last meal. As I entered the village I engaged six strong companions, and to-morrow, sister Maase, I will bring you the handsomest white fur that ever ran over mountain snow."

"Take care, brother," said the woman; "you have seen strange things, truly. That bear may be the Devil."

"Are you mad?" interrupted the mountaineer, with a laugh; "the Devil change himself into a bear, indeed! Into a cat or a monkey, I grant you; but to a bear! Oh, by Saint Eldon the exorciser, you're worse than any child or old woman, with your superstition!"

The poor woman hung her head.

"Brother, you were my lord and master before my revered husband cast his eyes upon me; do as your guardian angel bids you."

"But," the fisherman asked the mountaineer, "where did you meet with this bear?"

"Between Lake Miösen and Walderhog."

"Walderhog!" said the woman, crossing herself.

"Walderhog!" repeated Ordener.

"But, brother," rejoined the fisherman; "I hope you were not travelling toward Walderhog."

"I! Heaven forbid; it was the bear."

"Shall you go there to-morrow in search of him?" broke in the terrified Maase.

"No, truly; how can you suppose, friends, that even a bear would venture to take refuge in a cave where —"

He stopped short, and all three made the sign of the cross.

"You are right," replied the fisherman; "wild beasts would be warned away by their instinct."

"My good friends," said Ordener, "what is there so frightful about this Walderhog cave?"

They looked at one another in stupid surprise, as if they could not understand such a question.

"Is that where King Walder's tomb is?" added the young man.

"Yes," replied the woman; "a stone tomb which sings."

"And that's not all," said the fisherman.

"No," she added; "the bones of the dead dance there by night."

"And that's not all," said the mountaineer.

All were silent, as if they dared not go on.

"Well," asked Ordener, "what else is there that is supernatural?"

"Young man," said the mountaineer, gravely, "you should not speak so lightly; when you see an old gray wolf like me, shudder."

The young man answered, with a gentle smile: "Still, I

should like to know all the marvels which occur in this Walderhog cave; for that is exactly where I am going."

These words seemed to turn his three hearers into stone.

"To Walderhog! Heavens! are you going to Walderhog?"

"And he says that," rejoined the fisherman, "just as I might say I'm going to Loevig to sell my codfish, or to Ralph's meadow for herring. To Walderhog! Great Heavens!"

"Poor young man!" cried the wife; "were you born without a guardian angel? Have you no patron saint? Alas! it must be so; for you do not even seem to know your own name."

"And what motive," broke in the mountainer, "can lead your worship to that fearful spot?"

"I have a question to ask," answered Ordener.

The astonishment of his hosts grew with their curiosity.

"See here, stranger; you do not seem to be familiar with this part of the country. Your worship is doubtless mistaken; it cannot be to Walderhog that you wish to go."

"Besides," added the mountaineer, "if you want to speak with any human being, you will find none there."

"None but the demon," rejoined the woman.

"The demon! What demon?"

"Yes," she added; "the one for whom the tomb sings and the dead dance."

"Then you do not know, sir," said the fisherman, dropping his voice and approaching Ordener,—"you do not know that Walderhog cave is the favorite abode of —"

The woman stopped him.

"Husband, do not speak that name; it brings ill luck."

"Whose abode?" asked Ordener.

"That of Beelzebub incarnate," said Kennybol.

"Really, my kind hosts, I know not what you mean. I was surely told that Walderhog was the haunt of Hans of Iceland."

A triple cry of terror arose.

"Well! — Then you do know! — He is the demon we mean!"

The woman drew her woollen kerchief over her face, and called on all the saints to witness that it was not she who uttered that name.

When the fisherman had somewhat recovered from his surprise, he looked steadily at Ordener, as if there were something about that young man which he could not comprehend.

"I did not expect, stranger, that even if I lived still longer than my father, who died at the age of one hundred and twenty, I should ever have to show the road to Walderhog to any human being possessed of his senses and believing in God."

"Surely not," cried Maase; "your worship will not go to that accursed cave; for if one only step foot inside, he must make a compact with the Devil!"

"I must go, my kind hosts, and the greatest service that you can do me is to show me the shortest road there."

"The shortest way to reach the place where you wish to go," said the fisherman, "is to throw yourself from the top of the nearest rock into the next torrent."

"Should I reach the same end," quietly asked Ordener, "by preferring a useless death to a profitable danger?"

Braal shook his head, while his brother looked scrutinizingly at the young adventurer.

"I understand," suddenly exclaimed the fisherman; "you want to earn the thousand crowns reward which the lord mayor offers for the head of this Iceland demon."

Ordener smiled.

"Young sir," added the fisherman, with deep emotion, "take my advice; give up your scheme. I am old and poor, and I would not sell the remnant of my life for a thousand crowns if I had but one day left."

The woman, with a beseeching, compassionate look, watched the effect of her husband's entreaties. Ordener made haste to reply: "It is a much higher motive which leads me to

seek this robber whom you call a demon; it is for the sake of others, not my own —"

The mountaineer, who had not taken his eyes from Ordener, interrupted him.

"I understand you now. I know why you seek the demon of Iceland."

"I wish to force him to fight," said the young man.

"That's it," said Kennybol; "you are intrusted with important interests, are you not?"

"So I just said."

The mountaineer approached the young man with an air of great intelligence, and to his utter amazement whispered in his ear: "You come from Count Schumacker, from Griffenfeld, do you not?"

"Good man," he exclaimed, "how did you know that?"

And, indeed, it was hard for him to guess how a Norwegian mountaineer came to know a secret which he had confided to no one, not even to General Levin.

Kennybol leaned toward him.

"I wish you success," he observed in the same mysterious whisper. "You are a noble young man to labor thus for the oppressed."

Ordener's surprise was so great that he could scarcely find words to inquire how the mountaineer had learned the purpose of his journey.

"Silence!" said Kennybol, putting his finger to his lip. "I hope that you may gain all that you desire from the dweller in Walderhog; my arm, like yours, is loyal to the prisoner of Munkholm."

Then, raising his voice, before Ordener could answer, he added: "Brother, dear sister Maase, regard this worthy youth as another brother. Come, I think supper is ready."

"What!" interrupted Maase, "have you persuaded his worship to give up his plan for visiting the demon?"

"Sister, pray that no harm may come to him. He is a noble and worthy young man. Come, brave sir, take some

food and a little rest beneath our roof; to-morrow I will show you your road, and we will set out in search,— you of the Devil, and I of my bear."

XXIX

Comrade, ah! comrade, what comrade's son art thou? From what race canst thou have sprung to dare attack Fafnir thus? — EDDA.

THE first rays of the rising sun were just reddening the highest peak of the rocks upon the seacoast, when the fisherman, who had come before the dawn to cast his nets off the shore opposite the mouth of Walderhog cave, saw a figure wrapped in a cloak or shroud descend from the rocks, and disappear beneath the much-dreaded arched roof of the cavern. Struck with terror, he commended his boat and his soul to Saint Usuph, and ran to tell his frightened family that he had seen one of the ghosts which dwell in the palace of Hans of Iceland return to the cave at daybreak.

This ghost, thenceforth the theme and dread of many a long winter evening, was no other than Ordener, the noble son of the Norwegian viceroy, who, while both kingdoms fancied him absorbed in paying tender attentions to his haughty betrothed, had come alone and unknown to risk his life for her to whom he had given his heart and his future, for the daughter of a proscribed man.

Evil omens, sad forebodings, had thus far accompanied him. He had left the fisherman and his family, and as they parted, good Maase knelt and prayed for him. Kennybol and his six comrades, who had pointed out the right road, quitted him within half a mile of Walderhog, and those dauntless hunters who sallied forth to face a bear with a laugh on their lips, gazed in terror upon the fearless traveller as he followed that unhallowed path.

The young man entered Walderhog cave as he might have

entered a long-wished-for haven. He felt a transport of delight as he thought that he was about to accomplish the object of his life, and that in a few moments he might perhaps shed his last drop of blood for his Ethel. About to attack a brigand dreaded by an entire province, it might be a monster, a very demon, it was not that frightful image which filled his fancy; he saw only the figure of the sweet captive maid, praying perhaps for him before her prison altar. Had the object of his devotion been any other than it was, he might have weighed for an instant, only to scorn them, the dangers in search of which he had journeyed so far; but what room is there for reflection in a youthful heart throbbing with the double stimulus of heroic sacrifice and noble love?

He advanced proudly into the vaulted cavern, which echoed and re-echoed the sound of his footsteps, not deigning even a glance at the stalactites and the century-old columns of basalt which towered above him amid mosses, lichen, and ivy, — a confused medley of weird forms, from which the superstitious credulity of the Norwegian country-folk had more than once created hosts of evil spirits or long processions of ghosts.

With the same indifference he passed the tomb of King Walder, to which so many mournful legends cling, and he heard no voice save the long-drawn sigh of the north wind through those gloomy galleries.

He traversed winding passages, dimly lighted by crevices half stopped with grass and heather. Ever and anon he stumbled over strange objects, which rolled from beneath his foot with a hollow sound, and assumed in the darkness the shape of broken skulls or long rows of white teeth with fleshless gums.

But his soul was undismayed. He was only surprised that he had not yet encountered the much-dreaded inhabitant of this horrible cave.

He reached a sort of circular hall, hewn from the rock. Here the subterranean road which he had thus far followed came to an end, and the rocky walls were without exit, save

for a few wide fissures, through which he saw the mountains and woods outside.

Amazed that he should have thus traversed the fatal cavern in vain, he began to despair of finding the brigand. A singular monument in the middle of the underground hall caught his attention. Three long, massive bowlders, standing upright, supported a fourth, broad and square, as three pillars might uphold a roof. Beneath this gigantic tripod was an altar, also formed of a single block of granite, with a round hole in the middle of its upper surface. Ordener recognized it as one of those colossal Druidic structures which he had often seen in travelling through Norway, the most amazing instances being found in France, at Lokmariaker and Karnak,— wondrous fabrics which have grown old, resting upon the earth like tents pitched for a day, and made solid by their mere weight.

The young man, lost in thought, leaned mechanically against this altar, whose stone lips were stained dark brown, so deep had they drunk of the blood of human victims.

All at once he started. A voice, apparently proceeding from the stone, fell upon his ear: "Young man, you come to this place with feet which touch the tomb."

He rose quickly, and his hand sought his sword, while an echo, clear but faint as the voice of a dying man, repeated: "Young man, you come to this place with feet which touch the tomb." At this instant a hideous face appeared on the other side of the Druid altar, a face crowned with red hair, and disfigured by a brutal sneer.

"Young man," it again repeated, "you come to this place with feet which touch the tomb."

"And with a hand which touches a sword," calmly responded Ordener.

The monster merged from beneath the altar, revealing his thick-set, muscular limbs, his wild, blood-stained dress, his hooked hands, and his heavy stone axe.

"It is I," he cried, with a growl like that of a wild beast.

"And I," answered Ordener.

"I expected you."

"I did more," replied the bold young man; "I sought you out."

The brigand folded his arms.

"Do you know who I am?"

"Yes."

"And you are not frightened?"

"Not now."

"Then you were afraid to come here?" And the monster tossed his head with a look of triumph.

"Afraid I might not find you."

"You bid me defiance, and your feet have trampled on dead bodies!"

"To-morrow they may tread upon your own."

The little man quivered with rage. Ordener stood motionless, in an attitude of haughty calm.

"Take care!" muttered the brigand; "I will burst upon you and rend you as Norwegian hailstones do a lady's parasol."

"Such a shield would be all-sufficient for me."

Something in Ordener's eyes seemed to daunt the monster. He plucked the hairs from his mantle, as a tiger might devour grass before it springs upon its prey.

"You teach me what pity means," he said.

"And you teach me what it is to scorn."

"Child, your voice is soft, your face is fair, like the voice and the face of a girl; what death will you choose?"

"Your own."

The small man laughed.

"Know you not that I am a demon, that my spirit is the spirit of Ingulf the Destroyer?"

"I know that you are a robber, that you commit murder for the love of gold."

"You are wrong," broke in the monster; "it is for the love of blood."

"Were you not paid by the d'Ahlefelds to slay Captain Dispolsen?"

"What are you talking about? What names are these?"

"Do you not know Captain Dispolsen, whom you killed on Urchtal Sands?"

"That may be, but I have forgotten him, as I shall forget you three days hence."

"Do you not know Count d'Ahlefeld, who paid you to steal an iron casket from the captain?"

"D'Ahlefeld! Stay; yes, I know him. I drank his son's blood only yesterday, from my son's skull."

Ordener shuddered with horror.

"Were you not content with your wages?"

"What wages?" asked the brigand.

"Hark ye; the sight of you offends me; I must have done. You stole, a week since, an iron casket from one of your victims, a Munkholm officer, did you not?"

At the word "Munkholm" the brigand started.

"An officer from Munkholm?" he muttered. Then he asked, with a look of surprise, "Are you too an officer from Munkholm?"

"No," said Ordener.

"So much the worse!" and his face clouded.

"Enough of this," rejoined the persistent Ordener; "where is the casket that you stole from the captain?"

The little man meditated for a moment.

"By Ingulf! here's a paltry iron box that occupies many minds. I will promise you there'll not be so much search for that which holds your bones, if ever they be collected in a coffin."

These words, as they showed Ordener that the robber knew the casket to which he referred, revived his hope of obtaining it.

"Tell me what you did with that casket. Is it in Count d'Ahlefeld's possession?"

"No."

"You lie, for you laugh."

"Believe what you will. What matters it to me?"

The monster had assumed a mocking air which awakened

Ordener's suspicions. He saw that there was nothing to be done but to rouse him to fury if possible, or to intimidate him.

"Hear me," said he, raising his voice; "you must give me that casket."

The other answered with a savage sneer.

"You must give it to me!" the young man repeated in tones of thunder.

"Are you accustomed to issuing orders to buffaloes and bears?" replied the monster, still sneering.

"I would give this command to the very Devil in hell."

"You may do so ere long, if you like."

Ordener drew his sword, which gleamed in the darkness like a flash of lightning.

"Obey me!"

"Nay," cried Hans, brandishing his axe; "I might have broken your bones and sucked your blood when you first appeared, but I restrained my wrath; I was curious to see the sparrow attack the vulture."

"Wretch," exclaimed Ordener, "defend yourself!"

"'Tis the first time I was ever told to do so," muttered the brigand, gnashing his teeth.

With these words, he sprang upon the granite altar and gathered himself together, like a leopard awaiting the hunter on a high cliff, ready to spring upon him unawares.

From this vantage-ground he glared at the young man, apparently seeking the best side from which to attack him. All would have been over with Ordener had he hesitated an instant. But he gave the brigand no time to consider, and threw himself violently upon him, aiming the point of his sword at his face.

Then began the most fearful fight which imagination can picture. The little man, standing upon the altar, like a statue on its pedestal, looked like one of those horrid idols which, in barbarous ages, received in that same spot impious sacrifices and sacrilegious offerings.

His movements were so rapid that upon whatever side

Ordener attacked him, he always met the monster face to face, and encountered his blade. He would have been hewn in pieces at the first onslaught, had he not had the lucky forethought to wrap his mantle loosely around his left arm, so that the greater part of his furious opponent's blows were foiled by this floating shield. Thus for some moments both made useless though tremendous efforts to wound each other. The small man's fiery gray eyes seemed starting from their sockets. Surprised to meet with such vigorous and bold resistance from a foe apparently so feeble, his savage sneers changed to silent rage. The brutal immobility of the monster's features, and Ordener's dauntless composure contrasted strangely with the swiftness of their motions and the vigor of their attack. Not a sound was heard but the clash of weapons, the young man's quick steps, and the hurried breathing of both adversaries, when the little man uttered a fearful roar. The blade of his axe had caught in the folds of the cloak. He braced himself; he shook his arm frantically, but only succeeded in entangling the handle with the blade in the clinging stuff, which, with every fresh effort, wound itself closer and closer about it.

The dreadful brigand felt the young man's steel upon his breast.

"Once more I ask you," said the triumphant Ordener, "will you give me that iron casket which you stole like a coward?"

The small man was silent for an instant; then he said, with a roar: "Curse you, no!"

Ordener rejoined, still retaining his victorious and threatening attitude: "Consider!"

"No; I tell you no!" repeated the brigand.

The noble youth lowered his sword.

"Well," said he, "release your axe from the folds of my mantle, and let us fight it out."

With a disdainful laugh, the monster answered: —

"Child, you play the generous man, as if I wanted your indulgence!"

Before the astonished Ordener could turn his head, the brigand had placed his foot on the shoulder of his loyal victor, and at one bound stood twelve paces away from him. With another leap he sprang at Ordener, and hung his entire weight upon him, as the panther hangs with teeth and claws to the flanks of the royal lion. His nails dug deep into the young man's shoulders, his bony knees were pressed into his flesh, while his fierce face showed Ordener a bloody mouth and cruel teeth ready to tear him limb from limb. He ceased to speak; no human words issued from his heaving chest; a low roar mingled with hoarse, passionate yells alone expressed his rage. He was more hideous than a wild beast, more monstrous than a demon; he was a man deprived of all semblance of humanity.

Ordener tottered beneath the small man's onslaught, and would have fallen at the unexpected shock, had not one of the heavy pillars of the Druid monument happened to be just behind to sustain him. He stood therefore half overthrown and gasping beneath the weight of his fearful foe. To gain any idea of the horrible spectacle offered at this moment, it must be remembered that all which we have described occurred in far less time than is required to write it.

As we said, the noble youth tottered, but he did not quake. He hastily addressed a farewell thought to Ethel. The thought of his love was like a prayer; it restored his strength. He threw his arms about the monster; then seizing his sword by the middle of the blade, he pressed the point straight down upon his spine. The wounded brigand uttered a fearful scream, and with a sudden leap, which shook off Ordener, freed himself from his bold adversary's arms, and fell back some paces, taking in his teeth a fragment of the green cloak, which he had bitten in his fury.

He leaped up, supple and agile as a young deer, and the battle began again, for the third time, more terrible than ever. By chance there was, close by, a pile of huge stones over which moss and weeds had grown for centuries undisturbed. Two ordinary men could scarcely have lifted the

smallest of these rocks. Hans seized one in both arms and raised it above his head, poising it toward Ordener. His expression was frightful. The stone, flung with great violence, moved heavily through the air; the young man had just time to spring aside. The granite bowlder broke to fragments against the subterranean wall with a tremendous noise, which was echoed back for many moments from the depths of the cavern.

Ordener, stunned and amazed, had barely time to recover before a second mass of stone was poised in the brigand's grasp. Vexed that he should seem to stand like a coward to be pelted, he rushed toward the small man, with uplifted sword, to change this mode of warfare; but the fearful missile, launched like a thunderbolt, as it moved through the dense, dark air of the cave encountered the bare and slender blade; the steel was dashed to pieces like a bit of glass, and the monster's fierce laugh rang out. Ordener was disarmed.

"Have you," cried the monster, "aught to say to God or the Devil ere you die?"

And his eye darted flame, and all his muscles swelled with rage and joy, and he flung himself with a thrill of impatience upon his axe, which wrapped in the cloak, lay upon the ground. Poor Ethel!

All at once a distant roar was heard outside. The monster paused. The noise increased; shouts of men were mingled with the plaintive moan of a bear. The brigand listened. The cries of pain continued. He hastily seized his axe, and sprang, not toward Ordener, but toward one of the crevices in the rock. Ordener, overwhelmed with surprise to find himself thus unnoticed, hurried in his turn to one of these natural doors, and saw in a neighboring glade a large white bear at bay, surrounded by seven hunters, among whom he thought he recognized Kennybol, whose words had made such an impression upon him the night before.

He turned back. The brigand had left the cave, and a fearful voice shouted: "Friend! Friend! I am here! I am here!"

XXX

Peter, good fellow, has lost his all at dice.— RÉGNIER.

THE regiment of musketeers from Munkholm was on the march through the narrow passes lying between Throndhjem and Skongen. Sometimes it moved along the brink of a torrent, and the long line of bayonets crept through the ravine like a huge serpent wth glittering scales; sometimes it wound around a mountain, making it look like one of those triumphal columns about which curves an army of heroes in bronze.

The soldiers marched with trailing weapons and cloaks dragging in the dust, looking surly and tired, for these noble fellows are averse to anything but battle or inaction. The coarse banter and threadbare jests which delighted them but yesterday had lost their savor. The air was chill, the sky clouded. Nothing would raise a laugh in the ranks, unless one of the sutler-women should get an awkward tumble from her little Barbary horse, or a tin saucepan should happen to roll over the precipice and rebound from rock to rock.

To while away the monotony of the journey, Lieutenant Randmer, a young Danish baron, accosted old Captain Lory, who had risen from the ranks. The captain, moody and silent, moved with a heavy but confident step; the lieutenant, light and agile, played with a twig which he had plucked from the bushes that lined the road.

"Well, Captain, what ails you? You seem depressed."

"And I should say I had good cause," replied the old officer, without raising his eyes.

"Come, come, no regrets! Look at me. Am I depressed? And yet I would wager that I have quite as much cause as you."

"I doubt it, Baron Randmer; I have lost all I possessed; I have lost everything I loved."

"Captain Lory, our misfortunes are precisely the same. It is not a fortnight since Lieutenant Alberick won my castle and estate at a single deal of the cards. I am ruined; but am I the less gay?"

The captain answered in a very melancholy tone: "Lieutenant, you have only lost your castle; but I have lost my dog."

At this answer the light-minded baron seemed uncertain whether to laugh or sympathize; but he said: "Be comforted, Captain. Only think, I, who have lost my castle —"

The captain broke in upon his words: —

"What of that? Besides, you may win back another castle."

"And you may find another dog."

The old man shook his head.

"I may find another dog, but I shall never find my poor Drake."

He paused; great tears gathered in his eyes and rolled one by one down his hard, stern face.

"He was all I ever had to love," he added; "I never knew my parents. God grant them peace, and my poor Drake too! Lieutenant Randmer, he saved my life in the Pomeranian war. I called him Drake in honor of the famous admiral. My good dog! He never changed, as did my fortunes. After the battle of Oholfen, the great General Schack patted him, and said: 'You've a fine dog there, Sergeant Lory!'— for I was only sergeant then."

"Ah!" interrupted the young baron, slashing his switch, "how queer it must seem to be a sergeant."

The old soldier of fortune did not hear him; he appeared to be talking to himself, and Randmer could only catch a word here and there.

"Poor Drake! After surviving so many breaches and trenches, to be drowned like a blind kitten in that confounded Throndhjem fjord! My poor dog! my trusty friend! You deserved to die on the field of battle, as I hope to do."

"Come, come, Captain!" cried the lieutenant, "how can

you be so despondent? We may get a chance to fight to morrow."

"Yes," contemptuously answered the old captain, "with a pretty enemy!"

"What! do you despise those rascally miners, those devilish mountaineers?"

"Stone-cutters, highwaymen, fellows who don't know the first rudiments of warfare! A fine set of blackguards to face a man like me, who has served in all the wars in Pomerania and Holstein, in the campaigns of Scania and Dalecarlia; who fought under the glorious General Schack and the brave Count Guldenlew!"

"But don't you know," interrupted Randmer, "that these fellows are led by a formidable chief,— a giant as big and as brutal as Goliath, a rascal who drinks nothing but human blood, a very Satan incarnate?"

"And who may he be?" asked the captain.

"Why, the famous Hans of Iceland!"

"Pooh; I'll wager that this great general does not know how to shoulder a musket or handle a carbine properly."

Randmer laughed.

"Yes, you may laugh," continued the captain. "It will be very funny, no doubt, to cross swords with scurvy pickaxes, and pikes with pitchforks! Here are worthy foes indeed! My brave Drake would have scorned to snap at their heels!"

The captain was still giving free vent to his indignation, when he was interrupted by the arrival of an officer, who ran up to them all out of breath,—

"Captain Lory! my dear Randmer!"

"Well?" asked both at once.

"My friends, I am faint with horror! D'Ahlefeld, Lieutenant d'Ahlefeld, the lord chancellor's son! You know, my dear Randmer, that Frederic — such a dandy! such a fop!"

"Yes," replied the young baron, "a great dandy! Still, at the last ball at Charlottenburg my costume was in much better taste than his. But what has happened to him?"

"I know whom you mean," said Lory; "you mean Frederic d'Ahlefeld, lieutenant of Company Three. The men wear blue facings. He neglects his duty sadly."

"You will not have to complain of him again, Captain Lory."

"Why not?" said Randmer.

"He is garrisoned at Wahlstrom," coldly added the old officer.

"Exactly," said the new-comer; "the colonel has just received a message. Poor Frederic!"

"But what has happened? Captain Bollar, you alarm me."

Old Lory added: "Nonsense! The popinjay was absent from roll-call, I suppose, and the captain has sent the lord chancellor's son to prison: that is the misfortune which distresses you so sadly; I am sure it is."

Bollar clapped him on the shoulder.

"Captain Lory, Lieutenant d'Ahlefeld has been devoured alive."

The two captains looked each other in the face; and Randmer, startled for an instant, suddenly burst out laughing.

"Oh, Captain Bollar, I see you are as fond of a joke as ever! But you can't fool me in that way, I warn you."

And the lieutenant, folding his arms, gave way to mirth, swearing that what amused him the most was to see how readily Lory swallowed all Bollar's ridiculous stories. As for the story, he said it was a capital one; and it was a most clever idea to pretend that Frederic, who took such dainty, such absurd care of his complexion, had been swallowed raw.

"Randmer," said Bollar, seriously, "you act like a fool. I tell you d'Ahlefeld is dead; I have it from the colonel, — dead!"

"Oh, how well you play your part!" rejoined the baron, still laughing; "what a funny fellow you are!"

Bollar shrugged his shoulders, and turned to old Lory, who quietly asked the particulars.

"Oh, yes, my dear Captain Bollar," added the irrepres-

sible mocker; "tell us who ate the poor devil. Did he serve as breakfast for a wolf, or supper for a bear?"

"The colonel," said Bollar, "received a despatch just now, informing him, in the first place, that the Wahlstrom garrison is retreating toward us, driven back by a large party of rebels."

Old Lory frowned.

"In the second place," resumed Bollar, "that Lieutenant Frederic d'Ahlefeld, having gone into the mountains three days since to hunt, was captured near Arbar ruins by a monster, who carried him to his lair and there devoured him."

At this, Lieutenant Randmer's merriment increased.

"Oh, how our good Lory swallows your stories! That's right; keep up a sober face, Bollar. You are wonderfully amusing; but you don't tell us what this monster, this ogre, this vampire was, that carried off and ate up the lieutenant like a week-old kid!"

"I will not tell you," impatiently answered Bollar; "but I will tell Lory, who is not such an incredulous fool. Lory, my dear fellow, the monster who drank Frederic's blood was Hans of Iceland."

"The leader of the rebels!" exclaimed the old officer.

"Well, Lory," rejoined the scoffer, "do you think a man who handles his jaw so ably needs to know how to shoulder a musket?"

"Baron Randmer," said Bollar, "you are very like d'Ahlefeld in character; beware lest you meet with the same fate."

"I declare," cried Randmer, "that Captain Bollar's immovable gravity amuses me beyond expression."

"And Lieutenant Randmer's inexhaustible laughter alarms me more than I can say."

At this moment a group of officers, engaged in eager conversation, approached our three speakers.

"Zounds!" cried Randmer, "I must amuse them with Bollar's story."

"Comrades," he added, advancing to meet them; "have

you heard the news? Poor Frederic d'Ahlefeld has been eaten alive by the barbarous Hans of Iceland."

As he said these words, he could not repress a burst of laughter, which, to his great surprise, was received by the new-comers almost with shouts of indignation.

"What! can you laugh? I did not think, Randmer, that you would repeat such a dreadful piece of news so lightly. How can you laugh at such a misfortune?"

"What!" said Randmer, much confused; "is it really true?"

"Why, you just told us of it yourself!" was the general cry. "Don't you believe your own words?"

"But I thought it was one of Bollar's jokes."

An old officer interposed.

"Such a joke would be in very bad taste; but unfortunately it is no joke. Baron Vœthaün, our colonel, has just received the sad news."

"A fearful affair! It is really awful!" repeated a dozen voices.

"So we are to fight wolves and bears with human faces," said one.

"We are to be shot down," said another, "without knowing whence the bullet comes; we are to be picked off one by one, like birds in a cage."

"D'Ahlefeld's death," said Bollar, in a solemn tone, "makes me shudder. Our regiment is unlucky. Dispolsen's murder, that of those poor soldiers found dead at Cascadthymore, d'Ahlefeld's awful fate,— here are three tragic events in a very short space of time."

Young Baron Randmer, who had been silent, looked up.

"It is incredible," said he; "Frederic, who danced so well!"

And after this weighty remark he relapsed into silence, while Captain Lory declared that he was greatly distressed at the young lieutenant's death, and drew the attention of private Toric-Belfast to the fact that the brass clasp of his shoulder-belt was not so bright as usual.

XXXI

"Hush, hush! here comes a man climbing down a ladder."

. . . . . .

"Oh, yes; he is a spy."

"Heaven could grant me no greater favor than to let me offer you — my life. I am yours; but tell me, for mercy's sake, to whom does this army belong?"

"To a count from Barcelona."

"What count?"

. . . . . .

"What is it?"

"General, one of the enemy's spies."

"Whence come you?"

"I came here, little dreaming what I should find; little thinking what I should see."— LOPE DE VEGA: *La Fuerza Lastimosa.*

THERE is something desolate and forbidding in the aspect of a bare, flat region when the sun has set, when one is alone; when, as he walks, he tramples the dry grass beneath his feet, the dead brown leaves drop rustling from the trees, he hears the monotonous cry of the cricket, and sees huge, shapeless clouds sink slowly on the horizon like dead ghosts.

Such were Ordener's gloomy reflections on the night of his vain encounter with the Iceland robber. Startled by his abrupt disappearance, he at first tried to pursue him; but he lost his way in the heather, and wandered all day through a wild and uncultivated country, where he found no trace of man. At nightfall he was in a vast plain stretching to the horizon on every side, where there seemed no hope of shelter for the young traveller exhausted by fatigue and hunger.

It would have been a slight relief if his bodily suffering had not been aggravated by mental distress; but all was over. He had reached his journey's end without accomplishing his purpose. He could not even cherish those foolish illusions of hope which had urged him to pursue the monster; and now that nothing was left to sustain his courage, countless

discouraging thoughts, for which he had hitherto had no room, assailed him. What could he do? How could he return to Schumacker unless he could take with him Ethel's salvation? What was the frightful nature of the misfortune which the possession of the fatal casket would prevent, and what of his marriage to Ulrica d'Ahlefeld? If he could only free his Ethel from her undeserved captivity; if he could fly with her, and enjoy uninterrupted happiness in some distant exile!

He wrapped himself in his mantle, and threw himself upon the ground. The sky was dark; a tempestuous light ever and anon appeared in the clouds as if through a veil of crape and then vanished; a cold wind swept across the plain. The young man scarcely heeded these signs of an immediate and violent storm; and besides, even could he have found shelter from the tempest and a place to rest from his fatigue, could he have found a spot where he might avoid his misery or rest from thought?

All at once confused sounds of men's voices fell upon his ear. In surprise, he rose upon his elbow, and perceived at some distance a number of shadowy forms moving through the darkness. He looked again; a light shone in the midst of the mysterious group, and Ordener, with astonishment which may easily be imagined, saw the weird forms sink one after the other into the centre of the earth, until all had disappeared.

Ordener was above the superstitions of his age and country. His serious and mature mind knew none of those vain beliefs, those strange terrors, which torture the childhood of a race as well as the childhood of a man. And yet there was something supernatural about this singular vision which filled him with devout distrust against his better judgment; for who can tell whether the spirits of the dead may not sometimes return to earth?

He rose, made the sign of the cross, and walked toward the spot where the apparition vanished.

Big drops of rain now began to fall; his cloak filled like

a sail, and the feather in his cap, beaten by the wind, flapped in his face.

He stopped suddenly. A flash of lightning revealed just at his feet a large, round well, into which he must inevitably have fallen headlong had it not have been for this friendly warning. He approached the abyss. A faint light was visible at a fearful depth, and cast a red glow over the bottom of this huge opening in the bowels of the earth. The light, which seemed like a magic fire kindled by elves, only increased the immeasurable darkness which the eye was forced to pierce before reaching it.

The dauntless youth leaned over the abyss and listened. A distant murmur of voices rose to his ear. He no longer doubted that the beings who had so strangely appeared and disappeared before his very eyes had plunged into this gulf, and he felt an unconquerable desire, doubtless because it was so fated, to follow them, even should he pursue spectres to the mouth of hell. Moreover, the tempest now burst with fury, and this hole would afford him a shelter; but how was he to descend? What road had those he longed to follow taken, if indeed they were not phantoms? A second flash came to his aid, and showed him at his feet a ladder leading into the depths of the well. It consisted of a strong upright beam, crossed at regular intervals by short iron bars for the hands and feet of those who might venture into the gulf below.

Ordener did not hesitate. He swung himself boldly down upon the dreadful ladder, and plunged into the abyss without knowing whether it reached the bottom or not,— without reflecting that he might never again see the sun. Soon he could only distinguish the sky from the darkness overhead by the bluish flashes which lit it up at brief intervals; soon the rain pouring in torrents upon the surface of the earth, reached him merely as a fine, vaporous mist. Then the whirlwind, rushing violently into the well, was lost above him in a prolonged moan. He went down and down, and yet seemed scarcely nearer to the subterranean light. He went

on without losing heart, never looking below lest he should become dizzy and fall.

However, the air becoming more and more stifling, the sound of voices more and more distinct, and the purplish glow which began to tinge the walls of the pit, warned him that he was not far from the bottom. He descended a few more rounds, and saw plainly at the foot of the ladder the entrance to an underground passage lighted by a flickering red flame, while his ear caught words which won his entire attention.

"Kennybol does not come," said an impatient voice.

"What can detain him?" repeated the same voice after a brief pause.

"No one knows, Mr. Hacket," was the reply.

"He intended to spend the night with his sister, Maase Braal, in the village of Surb," added a different voice.

"You see," rejoined the first speaker, "I keep my promises. I agreed to bring Hans of Iceland for your leader. I have brought him."

An indistinct murmur followed these words. Ordener's curiosity, already aroused by the name of Kennybol, who had so astonished him the night before, was redoubled at the name of Hans of Iceland.

The same voice continued:—

"My friends, Jonas, Norbith, what matters it if Kennybol is late? There are enough of us; we need fear nothing. Did you find your standards at Crag ruins?"

"Yes, Mr. Hacket," replied several voices.

"Well, raise your banners; it is high time! Here is gold! Here is your invincible chief! Courage! March to the rescue of the noble Schumacker, the unfortunate Count Griffenfeld!"

"Hurrah! hurrah for Schumacker!" repeated many voices; and the name of Schumacker echoed and re-echoed from the subterranean arches.

Ordener, more and more curious, more and more amazed, listened, hardly daring to breathe. He could neither believe nor understand what he heard. Schumacker connected with

Kennybol and Hans of Iceland! What was this dark drama, one scene in which he, an unsuspected spectator, had witnessed? Whose life did they wish to shield? Whose head was at stake?

"In me," continued the same voice, "you see the friend and confidant of the noble Count Griffenfeld."

The voice was wholly unfamiliar to Ordener. It went on: "Put implicit trust in me, as he does. Friends, everything is in your favor; you will reach Throndhjem without meeting an enemy."

"Let us be off, Mr. Hacket," interrupted a voice. "Peters told me that he saw the whole regiment from Munkholm marching through the mountain-passes to attack us."

"He deceived you," replied the other, in authoritative tones. "The government as yet knows nothing of your revolt, and it is so wholly unsuspicious that the man who rejected your just complaints — your oppressor, the oppressor of the illustrious and unfortunate Schumacker, General Levin de Knud — has left Throndhjem for the capital, to join in the festivities on the occasion of the marriage of his ward, Ordener Guldenlew, and Ulrica d'Ahlefeld."

Ordener's feelings may be imagined. To hear all these names which interested him so deeply, and even his own, uttered by unknown voices in this wild, desolate region, in this mysterious tunnel! A frightful thought pierced his soul. Could it be true? Was it indeed an agent of Count Griffenfeld whose voice he heard? What! could Schumacker, that venerable old man, his noble Ethel's noble father, revolt against his royal master, hire brigands, and kindle a civil war? And it was for this hypocrite, this rebel, that he, the son of the Norwegian viceroy, the pupil of General Levin, had compromised his future and risked his life! It was for his sake that he had sought and fought with that Iceland bandit with whom Schumacker seemed to be in league, since he placed him at the head of these scoundrels! Who knows but that casket for which he, Ordener, was on the point of shedding his lifeblood, contained some of the base secrets of

this vile plot? Or had the revengeful prisoner of Munkholm made a fool of him? Perhaps he had found out his name; perhaps — and this thought was painful indeed to the generous youth — he wished to ruin the son of an enemy by urging him to this fatal journey!

Alas! when we have long loved and revered the name of an unfortunate man, when in our secret soul we have vowed everlasting devotion to his misfortunes, it is bitter to be repaid with ingratitude, to feel that we are forever disenchanted with generosity, and that we must renounce the pure, sweet joys of loyal self-sacrifice. We grow old in an instant with the most melancholy form of old age; we grow old in experience, and we lose the most beautiful illusion of a life whose only beauty lies in its illusions.

Such were the dispiriting thoughts that crowded confusedly upon Ordener's mind. The noble youth longed to die at that instant; he felt that his happiness had vanished. True, there were many things in the assertions of the man who described himself as Griffenfeld's envoy which struck him as false or doubtful; but these statements, being only meant to deceive a set of poor rustics, Schumacker was but the more guilty in his eyes; and this same Schumacker was his Ethel's father!

These reflections agitated him the more violently because they all thronged upon him at once. He reeled against the rounds of the ladder on which he stood, and listened still; for we sometimes wait with inexplicable impatience and fearful eagerness for the misfortunes which we dread the most.

"Yes," added the voice of the envoy, "you are to be commanded by the much-dreaded Hans of Iceland. Who will dare resist you? You fight for your wives and your children, basely despoiled of their inheritance; for a noble and unfortunate man, who for twenty years has languished unjustly in an infamous prison. Come, for Schumacker and liberty await you. Death to tyrants!"

"Death!" repeated a thousand voices; and the clash of

arms rang through the winding cave, mingled with the hoarse note of the mountaineer's horn.

"Stop!" cried Ordener.

He hurriedly descended the remainder of the ladder; for the idea that he might save Schumacker from committing a crime and spare his country untold misery had taken entire possession of him. But as he stood at the mouth of the cave, fear lest he might destroy his Ethel's father, and perhaps his Ethel herself, by rash invectives, took the place of every other consideration, and he remained rooted to the spot, pale, and casting an amazed glance at the singular scene before him.

It was like a vast square in some underground city, whose limits were lost amid endless columns supporting the vaulted roof. These pillars glittered like crystal in the rays of countless torches borne by a multitude of men, armed with strange weapons, and scattered in confusion about the cave. From all these points of light and all these fearful figures straying among the shadows, it might have passed for one of the legendary gatherings described by ancient chroniclers,— an assembly of wizards and demons, bearing stars for torches, and illuminating antique groves and ruined castles by night.

A prolonged shout arose.

"A stranger! Kill him! kill him!"

A hundred arms were raised to strike Ordener down. He put his hand to his side in search of his sword. Noble youth! In his generous ardor he had forgotten that he was alone and unarmed.

"Stay! stay!" cried a voice,— the voice of one whom Ordener recognized as Schumacker's envoy.

He was a short, stout man, dressed in black, with a deceitful smile. He advanced toward Ordener, saying: "Who are you?"

Ordener made no answer; he was threatened on every side, and there was not an inch of his breast uncovered by a sword-point or the mouth of a pistol.

"Are you afraid?" asked the little man, with a sneer.

"If your hand were upon my heart, instead of these

swords," coldly answered Ordener, "you would see that it beats no faster than your own, if indeed you have a heart."

"Ah, ha!" said the little man; "so you defy us! Well, then let him die!" And he turned his back.

"Give me death," returned Ordener; "it is the only thing that I would accept from you."

"One moment, Mr. Hacket," said an old man, with a thick beard, who stood leaning on a long musket. "You are my guests, and I alone have the right to send this fellow to tell the dead what he has seen."

Mr. Hacket laughed.

"Faith, my dear Jonas, let it be as you please! It matters little to me who judges this spy, so long as he is condemned."

The old man turned to Ordener.

"Come, tell us who you are, since you are so boldly curious to know who we are."

Ordener was silent. Surrounded by the strange allies of that Schumacker for whom he would so willingly have shed his blood, he felt only an infinite longing to die.

"His worship will not answer," said the old man. "When the fox is caught, he cries no more. Kill him!"

"My brave Jonas," rejoined Hacket, "let this man's death be Hans of Iceland's first exploit among you."

"Yes, yes!" cried many voices.

Ordener, astounded, but still undaunted, looked about him for Hans of Iceland, with whom he had so valiantly disputed his life that very morning, and saw with increased surprise a man of colossal size, dressed in the garb of the mountaineers. This giant stared at Ordener with brutal stupidity, and called for an axe.

"You are not Hans of Iceland!" emphatically exclaimed Ordener.

"Kill him! kill him!" cried Hacket, angrily.

Ordener saw that he must die. He put his hand in his bosom to draw out his Ethel's hair and give it one last kiss. As he did so, a paper fell from his belt.

"What is that paper?" asked Hacket. "Norbith, seize that paper."

Norbith was a young man, whose stern, dark features bore the stamp of true nobility. He picked up the paper and unfolded it. "Good God!" he exclaimed, "it is the passport of my poor friend, Christopher Nedlam, that unfortunate fellow who was beheaded not a week ago in Skongen market-place, for coining counterfeit money."

"Well," said Hacket, in a disappointed tone, "you may keep the bit of paper. I thought it was something more important. Come, my dear Hans, despatch your man."

Young Norbith threw himself before Ordener, crying: "This man is under my protection. My head shall fall before you touch a hair of his. I will not suffer the safe-conduct of my friend Christopher Nedlam to be violated."

Ordener, so miraculously preserved, hung his head and felt humiliated; for he remembered how contemptuously he had inwardly received Chaplain Athanasius Munder's touching prayer,—"May the gift of the dying benefit the traveller!"

"Pooh! pooh!" said Hacket, "you talk nonsense, good Norbith. The man is a spy; he must die."

"Give me my axe," repeated the giant.

"He shall not die!" cried Norbith. "What would the spirit of my poor Nedlam say, whom they hung in such cowardly fashion? I tell you he shall not die; for Nedlam will not let him die!"

"As far as that goes," said old Jonas, "Norbith is right. Why should we kill this stranger, Mr. Hacket? He has Christopher Nedlam's pass."

"But he is a spy, a spy!" repeated Hacket.

The old man took his stand with the young one at Ordener's side, and both said quietly: "He has the pass of Christopher Nedlam, who was hung at Skongen."

Hacket saw that he must needs submit; for all the others began to murmur, and to say that this stranger should not die, as he had the safe-conduct of Nedlam the counterfeiter.

"Very well," he hissed through his teeth with concentrated

rage; "then let him live. After all, it is your business, and not mine."

"If he were the Devil himself I would not kill him," said the triumphant Norbith.

With these words he turned to Ordener.

"Look here," he added, "you must be a good fellow as you have my poor friend Nedlam's pass. We are the royal miners. We have rebelled to rid ourselves of the protectorate of the Crown. Mr. Hacket, here, says that we have taken up arms for a certain Count Schumacker; but I for one know nothing about him. Stranger, our cause is just. Hear me, and answer as if you were answering your patron saint. Will you join us?"

An idea flashed through Ordener's mind.

"Yes," replied he.

Norbith offered him a sword, which Ordener silently accepted.

"Brother," said the youthful leader; "if you mean to betray us, begin by killing me."

At this instant the sound of the horn rang through the arched galleries of the mine, and distant voices were heard exclaiming, "Here comes Kennybol!"

XXXII

There are thoughts as high as heaven.— *Old Spanish Romance.*

THE soul sometimes has sudden inspirations, brilliant flashes whose extent can no more be expressed, whose depth can no more be sounded by an entire volume of thoughts and reflections, than the brightness of a thousand torches can reproduce the intense, swift radiance of a flash of lightning.

We will not, therefore, try to analyze the overwhelming and secret impulse which upon young Norbith's proposal led

the noble son of the Norwegian viceroy to join a party of bandits who had risen in revolt to defend a proscribed man. It was doubtless a generous desire to fathom this dark scheme at any cost, mixed with a bitter loathing for life, a reckless indifference to the future; perhaps some vague doubt of Schumacker's guilt, inspired by all the various incidents which struck the young man as equivocal and false, by a strange instinct for the truth, and above all by his love for Ethel. In short, it was certainly a secret sense of the help which a clear-sighted friend, in the midst of his blind partisans, might render Schumacker.

XXXIII

Is that the chief? His look alarms me; I dare not speak to him.—MATURIN: *Bertram.*

ON hearing the shouts which announced the arrival of the famous hunter Kennybol, Hacket sprang forward to meet him, leaving Ordener with the two other leaders.

"Here you are at last, my dear Kennybol! Come, let me present you to your much-dreaded commander, Hans of Iceland."

At this name, Kennybol, pale, breathless, his hair standing on end, his face bathed in perspiration, and his hands stained with blood, started back.

"Hans of Iceland!"

"Come," said Hacket, "don't be alarmed! He is here to help you. You must look upon him as a friend and comrade."

Kennybol did not heed him.

"Hans of Iceland here!" he repeated.

"To be sure," said Hacket, with ill-suppressed laughter; "are you afraid of him?"

"What!" for the third time interrupted the hunter; "do

you really mean it,— is Hans of Iceland here, in this mine? "

Hacket turned to the bystanders: "Has our brave Kennybol lost his wits? "

Then, addressing Kennybol: "I see that it was your dread of Hans of Iceland which made you so late."

Kennybol raised his hands to heaven.

"By Ethelreda, the holy Norwegian saint and martyr, it was not fear of Hans of Iceland, but Hans of Iceland himself, I swear, that delayed me so long."

These words caused a murmur of surprise to run through the crowd of miners and mountaineers surrounding the two speakers, and clouded Hacket's face as the sight and the rescue of Ordener had but a moment before.

"What! What do you mean? " he asked, dropping his voice.

"I mean, Mr. Hacket, that but for your confounded Hans of Iceland I should have been here before the owl's first hoot."

"Indeed! and what did he do to you? "

"Oh, do not ask me. I only hope that my beard may turn as white as an ermine's skin in a single day if I am ever caught again hunting a white bear, since I escaped this time with my life."

"Did you come near being eaten by a bear? "

Kennybol shrugged his shoulders contemptuously.

"A bear! a terrible foe that would be! Kennybol eaten by a bear! For what do you take me, Mr. Hacket? "

"Oh, pardon me! " said Hacket, with a smile.

"If you knew what had happened to me, good sir," interrupted the old hunter, in a low voice, "you would not persist in telling me that Hans of Iceland is here."

Hacket again seemed embarrassed. He seized Kennybol abruptly by the arm, as if he feared lest he should approach the spot where the giant's huge head now loomed up above those of the miners.

"My dear Kennybol," said he, solemnly, "tell me, I entreat you, what caused your delay. You must understand that at this time anything may be of the utmost importance."

"That is true," said Kennybol, after a brief pause.

Then, yielding to Hacket's repeated requests, he told him how that very morning, aided by six comrades, he had pursued a white bear into the immediate vicinity of Walderhog cave, without noticing, in the excitement of the chase, that they were so near that dreadful place; how the growls of the bear had attracted a little man, a monster, or demon, who, armed with a stone axe, had rushed upon them to defend the bear. The appearance of this devil, who could be no other than Hans, the demon of Iceland, had petrified all seven of them with terror. Finally, his six companions had fallen victims to the two monsters, and he, Kennybol, only owed his safety to speedy flight, assisted by his own nimbleness, Hans of Iceland's fatigue, and above all, by the protection of that blessed patron saint of hunters, Saint Sylvester.

"You see, Mr. Hacket," he concluded his tale, which was still somewhat incoherent from fright, and adorned with all the flowers of the mountain dialect,—"you see that if I am late you should not blame me, and that it is impossible for the demon of Iceland, whom I left this morning with his bear wreaking their fury upon the corpses of my six poor friends on Walderhog heath, to be here now in the guise of a friend. I protest that it cannot be. I know him now, that fiend incarnate; I have seen him!"

Hacket, who had listened attentively, said gravely: "My brave friend Kennybol, nothing is impossible to Hans or to the Devil; I knew all this before."

The savage features of the old hunter from the mountains of Kiölen assumed an expression of extreme amazement and childlike credulity. "What!" he exclaimed.

"Yes," added Hacket, in whose face a more skilful observer might have read grim triumph; "I knew it all, except that you were the hero of this unfortunate adventure. Hans of Iceland told me the whole story on our way here."

"Really!" said Kennybol; and he gazed at Hacket with respect and awe.

Hacket continued with the same perfect composure: "To

be sure. But now calm yourself; I will present you to this dreadful Hans of Iceland."

Kennybol uttered an exclamation of fright.

"Be calm, I say," repeated Hacket. "Consider him as your friend and leader; but be careful not to remind him in any way of what occurred this morning. Do you understand?"

Resistance was useless; but it was not without a severe mental struggle that he agreed to be presented to the demon. They advanced to the group where Ordener stood with Jonas and Norbith.

"May God guard you, good Jonas, dear Norbith!" said Kennybol.

"We need his protection, Kennybol," said Jonas.

At this instant Kennybol's eye met that of Ordener, who was trying to attract his attention.

"Ah! there you are, young man," said he, going up to him eagerly and offering him his hard, wrinkled hand; "welcome! It seems that your courage met with its reward."

Ordener, who could not imagine how this mountaineer happened to understand him so well, was about to ask an explanation, when Norbith exclaimed: "Then you know this stranger, Kennybol?"

"By my patron saint, I do! I love and esteem him. He is devoted, like ourselves, to the good cause which we all serve."

And he cast another meaning look at Ordener, which the latter was on the point of answering, when Hacket, who had gone in search of his giant, whose company all the insurgents seemed to avoid, came up to our four friends, saying: "Kennybol, my valiant hunter, here is your leader, the famous Hans of Klipstadur!"

Kennybol glanced at the huge brigand with more surprise than terror, and whispered in Hacket's ear: "Mr. Hacket, the Hans of Iceland whom I met this morning was a short man."

Hacket answered in low tones: "You forget, Kennybol; he is a demon!"

"True," said the credulous hunter; "I suppose he has changed his shape."

And he turned aside with a shudder to cross himself secretly.

XXXIV

The mask approaches; it is Angelo himself. The rascal knows his business well; he must be sure of his facts.— LESSING.

IN a dark grove of old oaks, whose dense leaves the pale light of dawn can scarcely penetrate, a short man approaches another man who is alone, and seems to be waiting for him. The following conversation begins in low tones:—

"Your worship must excuse me for keeping you waiting; several things detained me."

"Such as what?"

"The leader of the mountain men, Kennybol, did not reach the appointed place until midnight; and we were also disturbed by an unlooked-for witness."

"Who?"

"A fellow who thrust himself like a fool into the mine in the midst of our secret meeting. At first I took him for a spy, and would have put him to death; but he turned out to be the bearer of a safe-conduct from some gallows-bird held in great respect by our miners, and they instantly took him under their protection. When I came to consider the matter, I made up my mind that he was probably a curious traveller or a learned fool. At any rate, I have taken all necessary precautions in regard to him."

"Is everything else going well?"

"Very well. The miners from Guldsbrandsdal and the Färöe Islands, led by young Norbith and old Jonas, with the mountain men from Kiölen, under Kennybol, are probably

on the march at this moment. Four miles from Blue Star, their comrades from Hubfallo and Sund-Moer will join them; those from Kongsberg and the iron-workers from Lake Miösen, who have already compelled the Wahlstrom garrison to retreat, as your lordship knows, will await them a few miles farther on; and finally, my dear and honored master, these combined forces will halt for the night some two miles away from Skongen, in the gorges of Black Pillar."

"But how did they receive your Hans of Iceland?"

"With perfect confidence."

"Would that I could avenge my son's death on that monster! What a pity that he should escape us!"

"My noble lord, first use Hans of Iceland's name to wreak your revenge upon Schumacker; then it will be time enough to think of vengeance against Hans himself. The insurgents will march all day, and halt to-night in Black Pillar Pass, two miles from Skongen."

"What! can you venture to let so large a force advance so close to Skongen? Musdœmon, take care!"

"You are suspicious, noble Count. Your worship may send a messenger at once to Colonel Vœthaün, whose regiment is probably at Skongen now; inform him that the rebel forces will encamp to-night in Black Pillar Pass, and have no misgivings. The place seems made purposely for ambuscades."

"I understand you; but why, my dear fellow, did you muster the rebels in such numbers?"

"The greater the insurrection, sir, the greater will be Schumacker's crime and your merit. Besides, it is important that it should be crushed at a single blow."

"Very good; but why did you order them to halt so near Skongen?"

"Because it is the only spot in the mountains where all resistance is impossible. None will ever leave it alive but those whom we select to appear before the court."

"Capital! Something tells me, Musdœmon, to finish this business quickly. If all looks well in this quarter, it looks

stormy in another. You know that we have been making secret search at Copenhagen for the papers which we feared had fallen into the possession of Dispolsen?"

"Well, sir?"

"Well, I have just discovered that the scheming fellow had mysterious relations with that accursed astrologer, Cumbysulsum."

"Who died recently?"

"Yes; and that the old sorcerer delivered certain papers to Schumacker's agent before he died."

"Damnation! He had letters of mine,— a statement of our plot."

"*Your* plot, Musdœmon!"

"A thousand pardons, noble Count! But why did your worship put yourself in the power of such a humbug as Cumbysulsum? — the old traitor!"

"You see, Musdœmon, I am not a sceptic and unbeliever, like you. It is not without good reason, my dear fellow, that I have always put my trust in old Cumbysulsum's magic skill."

"I wish your worship had had as much doubt of his loyalty as you had trust in his skill. However, let us not take fright too soon, noble master. Dispolsen is dead, his papers are lost; in a few days we shall be safely rid of those whom they might benefit."

"In any event, what charge could be brought against me?"

"Or me, protected as I am by your Grace?"

"Oh, yes, my dear fellow, of course you can count upon me; but let us bring this business to a head. I will send the messenger to the colonel. Come, my people are waiting for me behind those bushes, and we must return to Throndhjem, which the Mecklenburger must have left ere now. Continue to serve me faithfully, and in spite of all the Cumbysulsums and Dispolsens upon earth, you can count on me in life and death!"

"I beg your Grace to believe — The Devil!"

Here they plunged into the thicket, among whose branches their voices gradually died away; and soon after, no sound was heard save the tread of their departing steeds.

XXXV

Beat the drums! They come, they come! They have all sworn, and all the same oath, never to return to Castile without the captive count, their lord.

They have his marble statue in a chariot, and are resolved never to turn back until they see the statue itself turn back.

And in token that the first man who retraces his steps will be regarded as a traitor, they have all raised their right hand and taken an oath.

. . . . . .

And they marched toward Arlançon as swiftly as the oxen which drag the chariot could go; they tarry no more than does the sun.

Burgos is deserted; only the women and children remain behind; and so too in the suburbs. They talk, as they go, of horses and falcons, and question whether they should free Castile from the tribute she pays Leon.

And before they enter Navarre, they meet upon the frontier. . . .

Old Spanish Romance.

WHILE the preceding conversation was going on in one of the forests on the outskirts of Lake Miösen, the rebels, divided into three columns, left Apsyl-Corh lead-mine by the chief entrance, which opens, on a level with the ground, in a deep ravine.

Ordener, who, in spite of his desire for a closer acquaintance with Kennybol, had been placed under Norbith's command, at first saw nothing but a long line of torches, whose beams, vying with the early light of dawn, were reflected back from hatchets, pitchforks, mattocks, clubs with iron heads, huge hammers, pickaxes, crowbars, and all the rude implements which could be borrowed from their daily toil, mingled with genuine weapons of warfare, such as muskets, pikes, swords, carbines, and guns, which showed that this revolt was a conspiracy. When the sun rose, and the glow of the torches was no more than smoke, he could better observe the aspect of this strange army, which advanced in

disorder, with hoarse songs and fierce shouts, like a band of hungry wolves in pursuit of a dead body. It was divided into three parts. First came the mountaineers from Kiölen, under command of Kennybol, whom they all resembled in their dress of wild beasts' skins, and in their bold, savage mien. Then followed the young miners led by Norbith, and the older ones under Jonas, with their broad-brimmed hats, loose trousers, bare arms, and blackened faces, gazing at the sun in mute surprise. Above this noisy band floated a confused sea of scarlet banners, bearing various mottoes, such as, "Long live Schumacker!" "Let us free our Deliverer!" "Freedom for Miners!" "Liberty for Count Griffenfeld!" "Death to Guldenlew!" "Death to all Oppressors!" "Death to d'Ahlefeld!" The rebels seemed to regard these standards rather in the light of a burden than an ornament, and they were passed frequently from hand to hand when the color-bearers were tired, or desired to mingle the discordant notes of their horns with the psalm-singing and shouts of their comrades.

The rear-guard of this strange army consisted of ten or a dozen cars drawn by reindeer and strong mules, doubtless meant to carry ammunition; and the vanguard, of the giant, escorted by Hacket, who marched alone, armed with a mace and an axe, followed at a considerable distance, with no small terror, by the men under command of Kennybol, who never took his eyes from him, as if anxious not to lose sight of his diabolical leader during the various transformations which he might be pleased to undergo.

This stream of insurgents poured down the mountainside with many confused noises, filling the pine woods with the sound of their horns. Their numbers were soon swelled by various reinforcements from Sund-Moer, Hubfallo, Kongsberg, and a troop of iron-workers from Lake Miösen, who presented a singular contrast to the rest of the rebels. They were tall, powerful men, armed with hammers and tongs, their broad leather aprons being their only shield, a huge wooden cross their only standard, as they marched soberly and

rhythmically, with a regular tread more religious than military, their only war-song being Biblical psalms and canticles. They had no leader but their cross-bearer, who walked before them unarmed.

The rebel troop met not a single human being on their road. As they approached, the goat-herd drove his flocks into a cave, and the peasant forsook his village; for the inhabitant of the valley and plain is everywhere alike,— he fears the bandit's horn as much as the bowman's blast.

Thus they traversed hills and forests, with here and there a small settlement, followed winding roads where traces of wild beasts were more frequent than the footprint of man, skirted lakes, crossed torrents, ravines, and marshes. Ordener recognized none of these places. Once only his eye, as he looked up, caught upon the horizon the dim, blue outline of a great sloping rock. He turned to one of his rude companions, and asked, "My friend, what is that rock to the south, on our right?"

"That is the Vulture's Neck, Oëlmœ Cliff," was the reply.

Ordener sighed heavily.

XXXVI

God keep and bless you, my daughter.— RÉGNIER.

MONKEY, paroquets, combs, and ribbons, all were ready to receive Lieutenant Frederic. His mother had sent, at great expense, for the famous Scudéry's latest novel. By her order it had been richly bound, with silver-gilt clasps, and placed, with the bottles of perfume and boxes of patches, upon the elegant toilet-table, with gilded feet, and richly inlaid, with which she had furnished her dear son Frederic's future sitting-room. When she had thus fulfilled the careful round of petty maternal cares which had for a moment caused her to forget her hate, she remembered that she had

now nothing else to do but to injure Schumacker and Ethel. General Levin's departure left them at her mercy.

So many things had happened recently at Munkholm of which she could learn but little! Who was the serf, vassal, or peasant, who, if she was to credit Frederic's very ambiguous and embarrassed phrases, had won the love of the ex-chancellor's daughter? What were Baron Ordener's relations with the prisoners of Munkholm? What were the incomprehensible motives for Ordener's most peculiar absence at a time when both kingdoms were given over to preparations for his marriage to that Ulrica d'Ahlefeld whom he seemed to disdain? And lastly, what had occurred between Levin de Knud and Schumacker? The countess was lost in conjectures. She finally resolved, in order to clear up all these mysteries, to risk a descent upon Munkholm,— a step to which she was counselled both by her curiosity as a woman and her interests as an enemy.

One evening, as Ethel, alone in the donjon garden, had just written, for the sixth time, with a diamond ring, some mysterious monogram upon the dusty window in the postern gate through which her Ordener had disappeared, it opened. The young girl started. It was the first time that this gate had been opened since it closed upon him.

A tall, pale woman, dressed in white, stood before her. She gave Ethel a smile as sweet as poisoned honey, and behind her mask of quiet friendliness there lurked an expression of hatred, spite, and involuntary admiration.

Ethel looked at her in astonishment, almost fear. Except her old nurse, who had died in her arms, this was the first woman she had seen within the gloomy walls of Munkholm.

"My child," gently asked the stranger, "are you the daughter of the prisoner of Munkholm?"

Ethel could not help turning away her head; she instinctively shrank from the stranger, and she felt as if there were venom in the breath which uttered such sweet tones. She answered: "I am Ethel Schumacker. My father tells

me that in my cradle I was called Countess of Tönsberg and Princess of Wollin."

"Your father tells you so!" exclaimed the tall woman, with a sneer which she at once repressed. Then she added: "You have had many misfortunes!"

"Misfortune received me, at my birth, in its cruel arms," replied the youthful captive; "my noble father says that it will never leave me while I live."

A smile flitted across the lips of the stranger, as she rejoined in a pitying tone: "And do you never murmur against those who flung you into this cell? Do you not curse the authors of your misery?"

"No, for fear that our curse might draw down upon their heads evils like those which they make us endure."

"And," continued the pale woman, with unmoved face, "do you know the authors of these evils of which you complain?"

Ethel considered a moment, and said: "All that has happened to us is by the will of Heaven."

"Does your father never speak to you of the king?"

"The king? I pray for him every morning and evening, although I do not know him."

Ethel did not understand why the stranger bit her lip at this reply.

"Does your unhappy father never, in his anger, mention his relentless foes, General Arensdorf, Bishop Spolleyson, and Chancellor d'Ahlefeld?"

"I don't know whom you mean."

"And do you know the name of Levin de Knud?"

The recollection of the scene which had occurred but two days before, between Schumacker and the governor of Throndhjem, was so fresh in Ethel's mind that she could not but be struck by the name of Levin de Knud.

"Levin de Knud?" said she; "I think that he is the man for whom my father feels so much esteem, almost affection."

"What!" cried the tall woman.

"Yes," resumed the girl; "it was Levin de Knud whom

my father defended so warmly, day before yesterday, against the governor of Throndhjem."

These words increased her hearer's surprise.

"Against the governor of Throndhjem! Do not trifle with me, girl. I am here in your interests. Your father took General Levin de Knud's part against the governor of Throndhjem, you say?"

"General! I thought he was a captain. But no; you are right. My father," added Ethel, "seemed to feel as much attachment for this General Levin de Knud as dislike for the governor of Throndhjem."

"Here is a strange mystery indeed!" thought the tall, pale woman, whose curiosity increased momentarily. "My dear child, what happened between your father and the governor?"

All these questions wearied poor Ethel, who looked fixedly at the tall woman, saying: "Am I a criminal, that you should cross-examine me thus?"

At these simple words the stranger seemed thunder-struck, as if she saw the reward of her skill slipping through her fingers. She replied, nevertheless, in a tremulous voice: "You would not speak to me so if you knew why and for whom I come."

"What!" said Ethel; "do you come from him? Do you bring me a message from him?" And all the blood in her body rushed to her fair face; her heart throbbed in her bosom with impatience and alarm.

"From whom?" asked the stranger.

The young girl hesitated as she was about to utter the adored name. She saw a flash of wicked joy gleam in the stranger's eye like a ray from hell. She said sadly:—

"You do not know the person whom I mean."

An expression of disappointment again appeared upon the stranger's apparently friendly face.

"Poor young girl," she cried; "what can I do to help you?"

Ethel did not hear her. Her thoughts were beyond the

mountains of the North, in quest of the daring traveller. Her head sank upon her breast, and her hands were unconsciously clasped.

"Does your father hope to escape from this prison?"

This question, twice repeated by the stranger, brought Ethel to herself.

"Yes," said she, and tears sparkled on her cheek.

The stranger's eyes flashed.

"He does! Tell me how; by what means; when!"

"He hopes to escape from this prison because he hopes ere long to die."

There is sometimes a power in the very simplicity of a gentle young spirit which outwits the artifices of a heart grown old in wickedness. This thought seemed to occur to the great lady, for her expression suddenly changed, and laying her cold hand on Ethel's arm, she said in a tone which was almost sincere: "Tell me, have you heard that your father's life is again threatened by a fresh judicial inquiry? That he is suspected of having stirred up a revolt among the miners of the North?"

The words "revolt" and "inquiry" conveyed no clear idea to Ethel's mind. She raised her great dark eyes to the stranger's face as she asked: "What do you mean?"

"That your father is conspiring against the State; that his crime is all but discovered; that this crime will be punished with death."

"Death! crime!" cried the poor girl.

"Crime and death," said the strange lady, seriously.

"My father! my noble father!" continued Ethel. "Alas! he spends his days in hearing me read the Edda and the Gospel! He conspire! What has he done to you?"

"Do not look at me so fiercely. I tell you again I am not your enemy. Your father is suspected of a grave crime; I am here to warn you of it. Perhaps, instead of such a show of dislike, I might lay claim to your gratitude."

This reproach touched Ethel.

"Oh, forgive me, noble lady, forgive me! What human

being have I ever seen who was not an enemy? I have doubted you. You will forgive me, will you not?"

The stranger smiled.

"What, my girl! have you never met a friend until to-day?"

A hot blush mantled Ethel's brow. She hesitated an instant.

"Yes. God knows the truth, we have found a friend, noble lady,— one only!"

"One only!" said the great lady, hastily. "His name, I implore. You do not know how important it is; it is for your father's safety. Who is this friend?"

"I do not know," said Ethel.

The stranger turned pale.

"Is it because I wish to serve you that you trifle with me? Consider that your father's life is at stake. Tell me, who is this friend of whom you speak?"

"Heaven knows, noble lady, that I know nothing of him but his name, which is Ordener."

Ethel uttered these words with that difficulty which we all feel in pronouncing before an indifferent person the sacred name which wakes within us every emotion of love.

"Ordener! Ordener!" repeated the stranger, with singular agitation, while her hands crumpled the white embroideries of her veil. "And what is his father's name?" she asked in a troubled voice.

"I do not know," replied the girl. "What are his family and his father to me? This Ordener, noble lady, is the most generous of men."

Alas! the accent with which these words were spoken revealed Ethel's secret to the sharp-sighted stranger.

She assumed an air of calm composure, and asked, without taking her eyes from the girl's face: "Have you heard of the approaching marriage of the viceroy's son to the daughter of the present lord chancellor, d'Ahlefeld?"

She was obliged to repeat her question before Ethel's mind could grasp an idea which did not interest her.

"I believe I have," was her answer.

Her calmness, and her indifferent manner, seemed to surprise the stranger.

"Well, what do you think of this marriage?"

It was impossible to note the slightest change in Ethel's large eyes as she replied: "Nothing, truly. May their union be a happy one!"

"Counts Guldenlew and d'Ahlefeld, the fathers of the young couple, are both bitter enemies of your father."

"May their marriage be blessed!" gently repeated Ethel.

"I have an idea," continued the crafty stranger. "If your father's life be really threatened, you might obtain his pardon through the viceroy's son upon the occasion of this great marriage."

"May the saints reward you for your kind thought for us, noble lady; but how should my petition reach the viceroy's son?"

These words were spoken in such good faith that they drew a gesture of surprise from the stranger.

"What! do you not know him?"

"That powerful lord!" cried Ethel. "You forget that I have never been outside the walls of this fortress."

"Truly," muttered the tall woman between her teeth. "What did that old fool of a Levin tell me? She does not know him. Still, that is impossible," said she; then, raising her voice: "You must have seen the viceroy's son; he has been here."

"That may be, noble lady; of all the men who have been here, I have never seen but one,— my Ordener."

"Your Ordener!" interrupted the stranger. She added, without seeming to notice Ethel's blushes: "Do you know a young man with noble face, elegant figure, grave and dignified bearing? His expression is gentle, yet firm; his complexion fresh as that of a maiden; his hair chestnut."

"Oh!" cried poor Ethel, "that is he; it is my betrothed, my adored Ordener! Where did you meet him? He told you that he loved me, did he not? He told you that he

has my whole heart. Alas! a poor prisoner has nothing but her love to give. My noble friend! It was but a week ago, — I can see him still on this very spot, with his green mantle, beneath which beats so generous a heart, and that black plume, which waved so gracefully above his broad brow."

She did not finish her sentence. The tall stranger tottered, turned pale, then red, and cried in her ears in tones of thunder: "Wretched girl, you love Ordener Guldenlew, the betrothed of Ulrica d'Ahlefeld, the son of your father's deadly foe, the viceroy of Norway!"

Ethel fell fainting on the ground.

XXXVII

Caupolican. Walk so cautiously that the earth itself may not catch your footfall. Redouble your precautions, friends. If we arrive unheard, I will answer for the victory.

Tucapel. Night veils all; fearful darkness covers the earth. We hear no sentinel; we have seen no spies.

Ringo. Let us advance!

. . . . . .

Tucapel. What do I hear? Are we discovered?

LOPE DA VEGA: *The Conquest of Arauco.*

"I SAY, Guldon Stayper, old fellow, the evening breeze is beginning to blow my hairy cap about my head rather vigorously."

These words were spoken by Kennybol, as his eyes wandered for a moment from the giant who marched at the head of the insurgents, and half turned toward a mountaineer whom the accident of a disorderly progress had placed beside him.

His friend shook his head and shifted his banner from one shoulder to the other, with a deep sigh of fatigue, as he answered:—

"Hum! I fancy, Captain, that in these confounded Black Pillar gorges, through which the wind rushes like a torrent

let loose, we shall not be as warm to-night as if we were flames dancing on the hearth."

"We must make such rousing fires that the old owls will be scared from their nests among the rocks in their ruined palace. I can't endure owls. On that horrid night when I saw the fairy Ubfem she took the shape of an owl."

"By Saint Sylvester!" interrupted Guldon Stayper, turning his head, "the angel of the storm beats his wings most furiously! Take my advice, Captain Kennybol, and set fire to all the pine-trees on the mountain. It would be a fine sight to see an army warm itself with a whole forest."

"Heaven forbid, my dear Guldon! Think of the deer, and the gerfalcons, and the pheasants! Roast the game, if you will, but do not burn it alive."

Old Guldon laughed: "Oh, Captain, you are the same devil of a Kennybol,— the wolf of deer, the bear of wolves, and the buffalo of bears!"

"Are we far from Black Pillar?" asked a voice from the huntsmen.

"Comrade," replied Kennybol, "we shall enter the gorge at nightfall; we shall reach the Four Crosses directly."

There was a brief silence, during which nothing was heard but the tramp of many feet, the moaning of the wind, and the distant song of the regiment of iron-workers from Lake Miösen.

"Friend Guldon Stayper," resumed Kennybol, when he had whistled an old hunting-song, "you have just passed a few days at Throndhjem, have you not?"

"Yes, Captain; my brother George, the fisherman, was ill, and I took his place in the boat for a short time, so that his poor family might not starve while he was ill."

"Well, as you come from Throndhjem, did you happen to see this count, the prisoner — Schumacker — Gleffenhem — what is his name, now? I mean that man in whose behalf we have rebelled against the royal protectorate, and whose arms I suppose you have on that big red flag."

"It is heavy enough, I can tell you!" said Guldon. "Do

you mean the prisoner in Munkholm fortress,— the count, if you choose to call him so; and how do you suppose, Captain, that I should see him? I should have needed," he added, lowering his voice, "the eyes of that demon marching in front of us, though he does not leave a smell of brimstone behind him; of that Hans of Iceland, who can see through stone walls; or the ring of Queen Mab, who passes through keyholes. There is but one man among us now, I am sure, who ever saw the count — the prisoner to whom you refer."

"But one? Ah! Mr. Hacket? But this Hacket is no longer with us; he left us to-day to return to —"

"I do not mean Mr. Hacket, Captain."

"And who then?"

"That young man in the green mantle, with the black plume, who burst into our midst last night."

"Well?"

"Well!" said Guldon, drawing closer to Kennybol; "he knows the count,— this famous count, as well as I know you, Captain Kennybol."

Kennybol looked at Guldon, winked his left eye, smacked his lips, and clapped his friend on the shoulder with that triumphant exclamation which so often escapes us when we are satisfied with our own penetration,—"I thought as much!"

"Yes, Captain," continued Guldon Stayper, changing his flame-colored banner to the other shoulder; "I assure you that the young man in green has seen Count — I don't know what you call him, the one for whom we are fighting — in Munkholm keep; and he seemed to think no more of walking into that prison than you or I would of shooting in a royal park."

"And how happen you to know this, brother Guldon?"

The old mountaineer seized Kennybol by the arm, and half opening his otter-skin waistcoat with a caution which was almost suspicious, he said, "Look there!"

"By my most holy patron saint!" exclaimed Kennybol; "it glitters like diamonds!"

It was indeed a superb diamond buckle, which fastened Guldon Stayper's rough belt.

"And they are real diamonds," he replied, closing his waistcoat. "I am just as sure of it as I am that the moon is two days' journey from the earth, and that my belt is made of buffalo leather."

Kennybol's face clouded, and his expression changed from surprise to distress. He cast down his eyes, and said with savage sternness:

"Guldon Stayper, of Chol-Sœ village, in the Kiölen mountains, your father, Medprath Stayper, died at the age of one hundred and two, without reproach; for it was no crime to kill one of the king's deer or elk by mistake. Guldon Stayper, fifty-seven good years have passed over your gray head, which cannot be called youth except for an owl. Guldon Stayper, old friend, I would rather for your sake that the diamonds in that buckle were grains of millet, if you did not come by them honestly,— as honestly as a royal pheasant comes by a leaden bullet."

As he pronounced this strange sermon, the mountaineer's tone was both impressive and menacing.

"As truly as Captain Kennybol is the boldest hunter in Kiölen," replied Guldon, unmoved, "and as truly as these diamonds are diamonds, they are my lawful property."

"Indeed!" said Kennybol, in accents which wavered between confidence and doubt.

"God and my patron saint know," replied Guldon, "that one evening, just as I was pointing out the Throndhjem Spladgest to some sons of our good mother Norway, who were carrying thither the body of an officer found dead on Urchtal Sands,— this was about a week ago,— a young man stepped up to my boat. 'To Munkholm!' says he to me. I was not at all anxious to obey, Captain; a free bird never likes to fly into the neighborhood of a cage. But the young gentleman had a haughty, lordly manner; he was followed by a servant leading two horses; he leaped into my boat with an air of authority; I took up my oars, that is to say, my

brother's oars. It was my good angel that willed me to do so. When we reached the fortress, my young passenger, after exchanging a few words with the officer on guard, flung me in payment — as God hears me, he did, Captain — this diamond buckle which I showed you, and which would have belonged to my brother George, and not to me, if at the time that the traveller — Heaven help him! — engaged me, the day's work which I was doing for George had not been done. This is the truth, Captain Kennybol."

"Very good."

Little by little the captain's features had cleared as much as their naturally hard and gloomy expression would permit, and he asked Guldon in a softened voice: "And are you sure, old fellow, that this young man is the same who is now behind us with Norbith's followers?"

"Sure! I could not mistake among a thousand faces the face of him who made my fortune; besides, it is the same cloak, the same black plume."

"I believe you, Guldon!"

"And it is clear that he went there to see the famous prisoner; for if he were not bound on some very mysterious errand, he would never have rewarded so handsomely the boatman who rowed him over; and besides, now that he has joined us —"

"You are right."

"And I imagine, Captain, that this young stranger may have far greater influence with the count whom we are about to set free than Mr. Hacket, who strikes me, by my soul! as only fit to mew like a wildcat."

Kennybol nodded his head expressively.

"Comrade, you have said just what I meant to say. I should be much more inclined in this whole matter to obey that young gentleman than the envoy Hacket. Saint Sylvester and Saint Olaf help me! but if the Iceland demon be our commander, I believe, friend Guldon, that we owe it far less to that magpie Hacket than to this stranger."

"Really, Captain?" inquired Guldon.

Kennybol opened his mouth to answer, when he felt a hand on his shoulder; it was Norbith.

Kennybol, we are betrayed! Gormon Woëstrœm has just come from the South. The entire regiment of musketeers is marching against us. The Schleswig lancers are at Sparbo; three companies of Danish dragoons await the cavalry at Loevig. All along the road he saw as many green jackets as there were bushes. Let us hasten toward Skongen; let us not pause until we reach that point. There, at least, we can defend ourselves. One thing more; Gormon thinks that he saw the gleam of muskets among the briers as he came through the defiles of Black Pillar."

The young leader was pale and agitated; but his face and voice still showed courage and resolution.

"Impossible!" cried Kennybol.

"It is certain! certain!" said Norbith.

"But Mr. Hacket —"

"Is a traitor or a coward. Depend on what I say, friend Kennybol. Where is this Hacket?"

At this moment old Jonas approached the two chiefs. By the deep discouragement stamped upon his features it was easily seen that he had learned the fatal news.

The eyes of the two elder men, Jonas and Kennybol, met, and they shook their heads with one accord.

"Well, Jonas! Well, Kennybol!" said Norbith.

But the aged leader of the Färöe miners slowly passed his hand across his wrinkled brow, and in a low voice answered the appealing look of the aged leader of the Kiölen mountaineers: "Yes, it is but too true; it is but too certain. Gormon Woëstrœm saw them."

"If it be so," said Kennybol, "what is to be done?"

"What is to be done?" answered Jonas.

"I consider, friend Jonas, that we should do well to halt."

"And better still, brother Kennybol, to retreat."

"Halt! retreat!" exclaimed Norbith; "we must push forward."

The two elders looked at the young man in cold surprise.

"Push forward!" said Kennybol; "and how about the Munkholm musketeers?"

"And the Schleswig lancers?" added Jonas.

"And the Danish dragoons?" continued Kennybol.

Norbith stamped his foot.

"And the royal protectorate; and my mother dying of cold and hunger?"

"The devil, the royal protectorate!" said the miner Jonas, with a shudder.

"Never mind!" said Kennybol.

Jonas took Kennybol by the hand, saying: "Old fellow, you have not the honor to be a ward of our glorious sovereign, Christian IV. May the blessed king Olaf, in heaven, deliver us from the protectorate!"

"You had better trust to your sword for that benefit!" said Norbith, in a fierce tone.

"Bold words are easy to a young man, friend Norbith," answered Kennybol; "but consider that if we advance, all these green jackets —"

"I think that it would be useless for us to return to our mountains, like foxes running from wolves, for our names and our revolt are known; and if we needs must die, I prefer a musket-ball to the hangman's rope."

Jonas nodded assent.

"The devil! the protectorate for our brothers, the gallows for us! Norbith may be right, after all."

"Give me your hand, good Norbith," said Kennybol; "there is danger in either course. We may as well march straight to the edge of the precipice as fall over it backwards."

"Come on! come on!" cried old Jonas, striking his sword-hilt.

Norbith grasped them by the hand.

"Listen, brothers! Be bold, like me; I will be prudent, like you. Let us not pause until we reach Skongen; the garrison is weak, and we will overwhelm it. Let us pass, since we must, through the defiles of Black Pillar, but in utter

silence. We must traverse them, even if they be guarded by the enemy."

"I do not think that the musketeers have come so far as Ordals bridge, beyond Skongen; but it matters not. Silence!"

"Silence! so be it!" repeated Kennybol.

"Now, Jonas," said Norbith, "let us return to our posts. To-morrow we may be at Throndhjem in spite of musketeers, lancers, dragoons, and all the green jerkins of the South."

The three chiefs parted. Soon the watchword, "Silence!" passed from rank to rank, and the insurgents, a moment before so tumultuous, looked, in those waste places darkened by approaching night, like a band of mute ghosts roaming noiselessly through the winding paths of a cemetery.

But their road became narrower every moment, and seemed by degrees to dive between two walls of rock which grew steeper and steeper. As the red moon rose among a mass of cold clouds hovering about her with weird inconstancy, Kennybol turned to Guldon Stayper, saying, "We are about to enter Black Pillar Pass. Silence!"

In fact, they had already heard the roar of the torrent which follows every turn of the road between the two mountains, and they saw, to the south, the huge granite pyramid known as the Black Pillar, outlined against the gray sky and the surrounding snow-capped mountains; while the western horizon, veiled in mists, was bounded by the extreme verge of Sparbo forest, and by huge piles of rocks, terraced as if a stairway for giants.

The rebels, forced to stretch their columns over this crooked road compressed between two mountains, continued their march. They penetrated those dark valleys without lighting a torch, without uttering a sound. The very sound of their footsteps was unheard amid the deafening crash of waterfalls and the roar of a furious blast which bowed the Druidical woods, and drove the clouds in eddying whirls about tall peaks clad in snow and ice. Lost in the dark depths of the gorge, the light of the moon, which was veiled now and again,

did not reach the heads of their pikes, and the white eagles flying overhead did not guess that so vast a multitude of men was troubling their solitude.

Once old Guldon Stayper touched Kennybol's shoulder with the butt-end of his carbine, saying, "Captain, Captain, something glimmers behind that tuft of holly and broom."

"So it does," replied the mountain chief; "it is the water of the stream reflecting the clouds." And they passed on.

Again Guldon grasped his leader quickly by the arm.

"Look!" he said; "are not those muskets, shining yonder in the shadow of that rock?"

Kennybol shook his head; then, after looking attentively, he said, "Never fear, brother Guldon; it is a moonbeam falling on an icy peak."

No further cause for alarm appeared, and the various bands, as they marched quietly through the winding gorge, insensibly forgot all the danger of their position.

After two hours of often painful progress, over the tree-trunks and granite bowlders which blocked the road, the vanguard entered the mountainous group of pine-trees at the end of Black Pillar Pass, overhung by high, black, moss-grown cliffs.

Guldon Stayper approached Kennybol, declaring that he was delighted that they were at last almost out of this cursed cut-throat place, and that they must render thanks to Saint Sylvester that the Black Pillar had not been fatal to them.

Kennybol laughed, swearing that he had never shared such old-womanish fears; for with most men, when danger is over it ceases to exist, and they try to prove by their incredulity the courage which they perhaps failed to display before.

At this moment two small round lights, like two live coals, moving in the thick underwood, attracted his attention.

"By my soul's salvation!" he whispered, pulling Guldon's arm, "see; those two blazing eyes must surely belong to the fiercest wildcat that ever mewed in a thicket."

"You are right," replied old Stayper; "and if he were

not marching in front of us, I should rather think that they were the wicked eyes of the demon of Ice —"

"Hush!" cried Kennybol. Then, seizing his carbine, he added, "Truly, it shall not be said that such fine game passed before Kennybol in vain."

The shot was fired before Guldon Stayper, who threw himself upon the rash hunter, could prevent it. It was not the shrill cry of a wildcat that answered the discharge of the gun; it was the fearful howl of a tiger, followed by a burst of human laughter more frightful still.

No one heard the report as its dying echoes were prolonged from rock to rock; for the flash of the powder had no sooner lighted up the darkness, the fatal crack of the gun had no sooner burst upon the silence, than a thousand terrible voices rang out unexpectedly from mountain, valley, and forest; a shout of "Long live the king!" loud as the rolling thunder, swept over the heads of the rebels, close beside them, behind and before them, and the murderous light of a dreadful volley of musketry, bursting from every hand, and striking them down, at the same time disclosed, amid red clouds of smoke, a battalion behind every rock, and a soldier behind every tree.

XXXVIII

To arms! to arms! ye captains!
The Prisoner of Ochali.

WE must now ask the reader to retrace with us the day which has just passed, and to return to Skongen, where, while the insurgents were leaving Apsyl-Corh lead-mine, the regiment of musketeers, which we saw on the march in an earlier chapter of this very truthful tale, had just arrived.

After giving a few orders in regard to billeting the soldiers under his command, Baron Vœthaün, colonel of the mus-

keteers, was about to enter the house assigned to him, near the city gate, when a heavy hand was placed familiarly upon his shoulder. He turned and saw a short man, whose face was almost wholly hidden by a broad-brimmed straw hat. He had a bushy red beard, and was closely wrapped in the folds of a gray serge cloak, which, by the tattered cowl still hanging from it, seemed once to have been a hermit's gown. His hands were covered with thick gloves.

"Well, my good man," asked the colonel, sharply, "what the deuce do you want?"

"Colonel of the Munkholm musketeers," replied the fellow, with an odd look, "follow me for a moment; I have news for you."

At this singular request, the baron paused for a moment in silent surprise.

"Important news, Colonel!" repeated the man with the thick gloves.

This persistence decided Baron Vœthaün. At such a crisis, and with such a mission as his, no information was to be despised. "So be it," said he.

The little man preceded him, and as soon as they were outside the town, he stopped. "Colonel, would you really like to destroy all the insurgents at a single blow?"

The colonel laughed, saying, "Why, that would not be a bad way to open the campaign."

"Very well! Then station your men in ambush this very day, in Black Pillar Pass, two miles distant from the town; the rebels are to encamp there to-night. When you see their first fire blaze, fall upon them with your troops. Victory will be easy."

"Excellent advice, my good man, and I thank you for it; but how did you learn all this?"

"If you knew me, Colonel, you would rather ask me how I could fail to know it."

"Who are you, then?"

The man stamped his foot. "I did not come here to answer such questions."

"Fear nothing. Whoever you may be, the service which you have done us must be your safeguard. Perhaps you were one of the rebels?"

"I refused to join them."

"Then why conceal your name, if you are a loyal subject of the king?"

"What is that to you?"

The colonel made another attempt to gain a little information as to this singular giver of advice. "Tell me, is it true that the insurgents are under command of the famous Hans of Iceland?"

"Hans of Iceland!" repeated the little man, with peculiar emphasis.

The baron repeated his question. A burst of laughter, which might have passed for the roar of a wild beast, was the only answer which he could obtain. He ventured a few more questions as to the number and the leaders of the miners; the little man silenced him.

"Colonel of the Munkholm musketeers, I have told you all that I have to tell. Lie in wait to-day in Black Pillar Pass with your entire regiment, and you may destroy the whole rebel force."

"You will not tell me who you are; you thus prevent the king from proving his gratitude; but it is only right that I should reward you for the service which you have done me."

The colonel threw his purse at the small man's feet.

"Keep your gold, Colonel," said he; "I do not need it. And," he added, pointing to a large bag which hung from his rope girdle, "if you wish pay for killing these men, I have money enough, Colonel, to give you for their blood."

Before the colonel could recover from the surprise caused by this mysterious being's inexplicable words, he had vanished.

Baron Vœthaün slowly retraced his steps, wondering whether he should place any faith in the fellow's news. As he entered his quarters, he was handed a letter, sealed with the lord chancellor's arms. It contained a message from Count d'Ahlefeld, which the colonel found, with amazement

that may be readily imagined, consisted of the same piece of news and the same advice just given him outside the city gate by the incomprehensible character with the straw hat and the thick gloves.

XXXIX

All must perish!
The sword cleaveth the helmet;
The strong armor is pierced by the lance;
Fire devoureth the dwelling of princes;
Engines break down the fences of the battle.
All must perish!
The race of Hengist is gone —
The name of Horsa is no more!
Shrink not then from your doom, sons of the sword!
Let your blades drink blood like wine;
Feast ye in the banquet of slaughter,
By the light of the blazing halls!
Strong be your swords while your blood is warm,
And spare neither for pity nor fear,
For vengeance hath but an hour;
Strong hate itself shall expire!
I also must perish!

WALTER SCOTT: *Ivanhoe.*

WE will not try to describe the fearful confusion which broke the already straggling ranks of the rebels, when the fatal defile suddenly revealed to them all its steep and bristling peaks, all its caverns peopled with unlooked-for foes. It would be hard to say whether the prolonged shout, made up of a thousand shrieks, which rose from the columns of men thus unexpectedly mowed down, was a yell of despair, of terror, or of rage. The dreadful fire vomited against them from every side by the now unmasked platoons of the royal troops, grew hotter every moment; and before another shot from their lines followed Kennybol's unfortunate volley, they were wrapped in a stifling cloud of burning smoke, through which death flew blindly, where each man, shut off from his friends, could but dimly distinguish the musketeers,

lancers, and dragoons, moving vaguely among the cliffs and upon the edge of the thickets, like demons in a red-hot furnace.

The insurgents, thus scattered over a distance of a mile, upon a narrow, winding road, bordered on one side by a deep torrent, on the other by a rocky wall, which made it impossible for them to turn and fall back, were like a serpent destroyed by a blow on the back, when he has unwound all his spirals, and, though cut to pieces, still tries to turn and coil, striving to unite his separate fragments.

When their first surprise was past, a common despair seemed to animate all these men, naturally fierce and intrepid. Frantic with rage to be thus overwhelmed without the possibility of defence, the rebels uttered a simultaneous shout,— a shout which in an instant drowned the clamor of their triumphant foes; and when the latter saw these men, without leaders, in dire disorder, almost destitute of weapons, climbing perpendicular cliffs, under a terrible fire, clinging with tooth and nail to the bushes growing on the verge of the precipice, brandishing hammers and pitchforks, the well-armed troops, well-drilled, securely posted as they were, although they had not yet lost a single man, could not resist a moment of involuntary panic.

Several times these barbarians clambered over a bridge of dead bodies, or upon the shoulders of their comrades planted against the rock like a living ladder, to the heights held by their assailants; but they had scarcely cried, "Liberty!" had scarcely lifted their hatchets or their knotted clubs,— they had scarcely showed their blackened faces, foaming with convulsive rage, ere they were hurled into the abyss, dragging with them such of their rash companions as they encountered in their fall, hanging to some bush or hugging some cliff.

The efforts of these unfortunates to fly and to defend themselves were fruitless. Every outlet was guarded; every accessible point swarmed with soldiers. The greater part of the luckless rebels bit the dust, perishing when they had

shattered scythe or cutlass upon some granite fragment; some, folding their arms, their eyes fixed upon the ground, sat by the roadside, silently waiting for a ball to hurl them into the torrent below; those whom Hacket's forethought had provided with wretched muskets, fired a few chance shots at the summit of the cliffs and the mouth of the caves, from which a ceaseless rain of shot fell upon their heads. A tremendous uproar, in which the furious shouts of the rebel leaders and the quiet commands of the king's officers were plainly distinguishable, was mingled with the intermittent and frequent din of musketry, while a bloody vapor rose and floated above the scene of carnage, veiling the face of the mountains in tremulous mists; and the stream, white with foam, flowed like an enemy between the two bodies of hostile men, bearing away upon its bosom its prey of corpses.

In the earlier stage of the action, or rather of the slaughter, the Kiölen mountaineers, under the brave and reckless Kennybol, were the greatest sufferers. It will be remembered that they formed the advance-guard of the rebel army, and that they had entered the pine wood at the head of the pass. The ill-fated Kennybol had no sooner fired his gun, than the forest, peopled as by magic with hostile sharpshooters, surrounded them with a ring of fire; while from a level height, commanded by a number of huge bowlders, an entire battalion of the Munkholm regiment, formed in a hollow square, battered them unceasingly with a fearful musketry. In this horrible emergency, Kennybol, distracted and aghast, gazed at the mysterious giant, his only hope of safety lying in some superhuman power such as that of Hans of Iceland; but, alas! the awful demon did not suddenly unfold broad wings and soar above the combatants, spitting forth fire and brimstone upon the musketeers; he did not grow and grow until he reached the clouds, and overthrow a mountain upon the foe, or stamp upon the earth and open a yawning gulf to swallow up the ambushed army. The dreadful Hans of Iceland shrank like Kennybol from the first volley of shot, and approaching him, with troubled countenance asked for a car-

bine, because, he said, in a very commonplace tone, at such a time his axe was quite as useless as any old woman's spindle.

Kennybol, amazed, but still credulous, offered his own musket to the giant with a terror which almost made him forget his fear of the balls showering about him. Still expecting a miracle, he looked to see his fatal weapon become as big as a cannon in the hands of Hans of Iceland, or to see it change into a winged dragon darting fire from eyes, mouth, and nostrils. Nothing of the sort occurred, and the poor hunter's astonishment reached its climax when he saw the demon load the gun with ordinary powder and shot, just as he himself might have done, take aim like himself, and fire, though with far less skill than he would have shown. He stared at him in stupid surprise, as this purely mechanical act was repeated again and again; and convinced at last that all hope of a miracle must be abandoned, he turned his thoughts to rescuing his companions and himself from their evil predicament by some human means. Already his poor old friend Guldon Stayper lay beside him, riddled with bullets; already his followers, terrified and unable to escape, surrounded on every hand, huddled together without a thought of defence, uttering distressing cries. Kennybol saw what an easy target this mass of men afforded the enemy's guns, each discharge destroying a score of the insurgents. He ordered his unfortunate companions to scatter, to take refuge in the bushes along the road,— much thicker and larger at this point than anywhere else in Black Pillar Pass,— to hide in the underbrush, and to reply as best they could to the more and more murderous fire from the sharpshooters and the Munkholm battalion. The mountaineers, for the most part well armed, being all hunters, carried out their leader's order with a readiness which they might not have displayed at a less critical moment; for in the face of danger men usually lose their head, and obey willingly any one who has presence of mind and self-possession to act for all.

Still, this wise measure was far from insuring victory, or even safety. More mountaineers lay stretched upon the

ground than still lived, and in spite of the example and encouragement offered them by their leader and the giant, several of them, leaning on their useless guns or prostrate with the wounded, obstinately persisted in waiting to be killed without taking the trouble to kill others in return. It may seem amazing that these men, in the habit of exposing their life every day in their expeditions over the glaciers in pursuit of wild beasts, should lose heart so soon; but let no one forget that in vulgar hearts courage is purely local. A man may laugh at shot and shell, and shiver in the dark or on the edge of a precipice; a man may face fierce animals daily, leap across fearful abysses, and yet run from a volley of artillery. Fearlessness is often only a habit; and one who has ceased to fear death under certain forms, dreads it none the less.

Kennybol, surrounded by heaps of dying friends, began himself to despair, although as yet he had received only a slight scratch on his left arm, and the diabolical giant still kept up his fire with the most comforting composure. All at once he saw an extraordinary confusion in the fatal battalion posted on the heights, which could not be caused by the slight damage inflicted by the very feeble resistance of his followers. He heard fearful shrieks of agony, the curses of the dying, exclamations of terror, rise from the victors.

Soon their fire slackened, the smoke cleared away, and he distinctly saw huge masses of granite falling upon the Munkholm musketeers from the top of the high cliff overlooking the level height upon which they were stationed. These bowlders succeeded one another with awful rapidity; they crashed one upon the other, and rebounded among the soldiers, who breaking their lines rushed in dire disorder down the hill, and fled in every direction.

At this unexpected aid, Kennybol turned; but the giant was still there! The mountaineer was dumfounded; for he supposed that Hans of Iceland had at last found his wings and taken his place upon the cliff, from which he overwhelmed the enemy. He looked up to the spot whence those fearful

masses fell, and saw nothing. He could therefore only suppose that a party of rebels had succeeded in reaching this dangerous position, although he saw no glitter of weapons, and heard no shouts of triumph.

However, the fire from the plateau had wholly ceased; the trees hid the remnant of the royal troops, who were probably rallying their forces at the foot of the hill. The musketry from the sharpshooters also became less frequent. Kennybol, like a skilful leader, took advantage of this unexpected interval; he encouraged his men, and showed them, by the sombre light which reddened the scene of slaughter, the pile of corpses heaped upon the height, and the bowlders which still fell at intervals.

Then the mountaineers in their turn answered the enemy's groans with shouts of victory. They formed in line, and although still harassed by sharpshooters scattered among the bushes, they resolved, filled with fresh courage, to force their way out of this ill-omened defile.

The column thus formed was about to move; Kennybol had already given the signal with his horn, amid loud cries of "Liberty! liberty! No more protectorate!" when the notes of trumpet and drum sounding a charge were heard directly in front of them. Then the rest of the battalion from the height, strengthened by reinforcements of fresh troops, appeared within gunshot at a turn in the road, displaying a bristling line of pikes and bayonets upheld by rank upon rank as far as the eye could reach. Arriving thus unexpectedly in sight of Kennybol's division, the troops halted, and a man, who seemed to be the commanding officer, stepped forward, waving a white flag and escorted by a trumpeter.

The unforeseen appearance of this troop did not dismay Kennybol. In time of danger there is a point where surprise and fear become impossible.

At the first sound of trumpet and drum the old fox of Kiölen halted his men. As the royal troops drew up before him in line of battle, he ordered every gun to be loaded, and formed his mountaineers in double ranks, so

that they might not offer so broad a mark for the enemy's fire. He placed himself at the head, the giant at his side, as in the heat of action, for he began to feel quite familiar with him, and observed that his eyes did not flame quite so brightly as a smithy's forge, and that his pretended claws were by no means as unlike ordinary human fingernails as was claimed for them.

When the officer in command of the musketeers stepped forward as if to surrender, and the sharpshooters ceased firing, although their loud shouts, ringing out on every hand, declared them still ambushed in the forests, he suspended his preparations for defence.

Meantime, the officer with the white flag had reached the centre of the space between the two hostile columns; here he paused, and the trumpeter accompanying him blew three loud blasts. The officer then cried in a loud voice; distinctly heard by the mountaineers, in spite of the ever increasing tumult of the battle raging behind them in the mountain gorges: "In the king's name! The king graciously pardons all those rebels who throw down their arms and surrender their leaders to his Majesty's supreme justice!"

The bearer of the flag of true had scarcely pronounced those words, when a shot was fired from a neighboring thicket. The officer staggered, took a few steps forward, raising his flag above his head, and fell, exclaiming: "Treason!"

No one knew whose hand had fired the fatal shot.

"Treason! Cowardly treason!" repeated the royal troops, with a thrill of indignation.

And a fearful volley of musketry overwhelmed the mountaineers.

"Treason!" replied the mountaineers in their turn, made furious as they saw their brothers fall.

And a general discharge answered the unexpected attack from the royal troops.

"At them, comrades! Death to those vile cowards! Death!" cried the officers of the musketeers.

And both parties rushed forward with drawn swords, the two contending columns meeting directly over the body of the unfortunate officer, with a fearful din of arms.

The broken ranks were soon inextricably confounded. Rebel chiefs, king's officers, soldiers, mountaineers, all pell-mell ran their heads together, seized one another, grappled like two bands of famished tigers meeting in the desert. Their long pikes, bayonets, and partisans were now useless; swords and hatchets alone gleamed above their heads, and many of the combatants, in their hand-to-hand struggle, could use no other weapon than their dagger or their teeth.

The same rage and fury inspired both mountaineers and musketeers; the common cry of "Treason! Vengeance!" sprang from every mouth. The fray had reached a point when every heart was full of brutal ferocity, when men walked with utter indifference over heaps of wounded and dead, amid which the dying revive only to make one last attack on him who tramples them under foot.

At this moment a short man, whom several combatants, amid the smoke and streaming blood, took for a wild beast, in his dress of skins, flung himself into the thick of the carnage, with awful laughter and yells of joy. None knew whence he came, nor upon which side he fought; for his stone axe did not choose its victims, but smote alike the skull of a rebel and the head of a musketeer. He seemed, however, to prefer slaying the Munkholm troops. All gave way before him; he rushed through the fray like a disembodied spirit; and his bloody axe whirled about him without a pause, scattering fragments of flesh, lacerated limbs, and shattered bones on every side.

He shrieked "Vengeance!" as did all the rest, and uttered strange words, the name of "Gill" recurring frequently. This fearful stranger seemed to regard the slaughter as a feast.

A mountaineer upon whom his murderous glance fell threw himself at the feet of the giant in whom Kennybol

had placed such vain trust, crying: "Hans of Iceland, save me!"

"Hans of Iceland!" repeated the little man.

He approached the giant.

"Are you Hans of Iceland?" he asked.

The giant by way of answer, raised his axe. The small man sprang back, and the blade, as it fell, was buried in the skull of the wretch who had implored his aid.

The unknown laughed aloud.

"Ho! ho! by Ingulf! I thought Hans of Iceland was more skilful."

"It is thus that Hans of Iceland saves those who pray to him for help!" said the giant.

"You are right."

The two dreadful champions attacked each other madly. Stone axe and steel axe met; they clashed so fiercely that both blades flew in fragments, with a myriad sparks.

Quicker than thought, the little man, finding himself disarmed, seized a heavy wooden club, dropped by some dying man, and evading the giant, who stooped to grasp him in his arms, dealt a furious blow with both hands on the broad brow of his colossal antagonist.

The giant uttered a stifled shriek and fell. The little man trampled him under foot in triumph, foaming with joy, and exclaiming, "You bore a name too heavy for you!" and brandishing his victorious mace, he rushed in search of fresh victims.

The giant was not dead. The force of the blow had stunned him, and he dropped senseless, but soon opened his eyes, and gave faint signs of returning life. A musketeer, seeing him through the uproar, threw himself upon him, shouting, "Hans of Iceland is taken! Victory!"

"Hans of Iceland is taken!" repeated every voice, whether in tones of triumph or distress.

The little man had vanished.

For some time the mountaineers had realized that they must perforce submit to superior numbers; for the Munk-

holm musketeers had been joined by the sharpshooters from the forest, and by detachments of lancers and foot dragoons, who poured in from deep gorges, where the surrender of many of the rebel leaders had put a stop to slaughter. Brave Kennybol, wounded early in the fight, was made a prisoner. Hans of Iceland's capture deprived the mountaineers of such courage as they still possessed, and they threw down their arms.

When the first beams of the rising sun gilded the sharp peaks of lofty glaciers still half submerged in darkness, mournful peace and fearful silence reigned in Black Pillar Pass, broken only by feeble moans borne away by the chill breeze.

Black clouds of crows flocked to those fatal gorges from every quarter of the horizon; and a few poor goat-herds, who passed the cliffs at twilight, hastened home in terror, declaring that they had seen an animal with the face of a man in Black Pillar Pass, seated on a heap of slain, drinking their blood.

XL

Let him who will, burn beneath these smouldering fires.— BRANTOME.

"OPEN the window, daughter; those panes are very dirty, and I would fain see the day."

"See the day, father! It will soon be night."

"The sun still lies on the hills along the fjord. I long to breathe the free air through my prison bars. The sky is so clear!"

"Father, a storm is at hand."

"A storm, Ethel! Where do you see it?"

"It is because the sky is clear, father, that I foresee a storm."

The old man looked at his daughter in surprise.

"Had I reasoned thus in my youth, I should not be

here." Then he added in a firmer tone: "What you say is correct, but it is not a common inference for one of your age. I do not understand why your youthful reasoning should be so like my aged experience."

Ethel's eyes fell, as if she were troubled by this serious and simple remark. She clasped her hands sadly, and a deep sigh heaved her breast.

"Daughter," said the aged prisoner, "for some days you have looked pale, as if life had never warmed the blood in your veins. For several mornings you have approached me with red and swollen lids, with eyes that have wept and watched. I have passed several days in silence, Ethel, with no effort on your part to rouse me from my gloomy meditations on the past. You sit beside me more melancholy even than myself; and yet you are not, like your father, weighted down by the burden of a whole lifetime of empty inaction. Morning clouds vanish quickly. You are at that period of existence when you can choose in dreams a future independent of the present, be it what it may. What troubles you, my daughter? Thanks to your constant captivity, you are sheltered from all sudden calamity. What error have you committed? I cannot think that you are grieving for me; you must by this time be accustomed to my incurable misfortunes. Hope, to be sure, can no longer be the subject of my discourse; but that is no reason why I should read despair in your eyes."

As he spoke these words, the prisoner's stern voice melted with paternal love. Ethel stood silently before him. All at once she turned away with an almost convulsive motion, fell upon her knees on the stone floor, and hid her face in her hands, as if to stifle the tears and sobs which burst from her.

Too much woe filled full the wretched girl's heart. What had she done to that fatal stranger, that she should reveal to her the secret that was eating away her very life? Alas! since she had known her Ordener's true name, the poor child had not closed her eyes, nor had her soul known rest. Night

brought her no alleviation, save that then she could weep freely and unseen. All was over! He was not hers, he who was hers by all her memories, by all her pangs, by all her prayers, he whose wife she had held herself to be upon the faith of her dreams. For the evening when Ordener had clasped her so tenderly in his arms was no more than a dream to her now. And in truth that sweet dream had been repeated nightly in her sleep. Was it a guilty love which she still cherished for that absent friend, struggle against it as she might? Her Ordener was betrothed to another! And who can tell what that virginal heart endured when the strange and unknown sentiment of jealousy found entrance there like a poisonous viper? When she tossed for long sleepless hours upon her fevered bed, picturing her Ordener, perhaps even then, in the arms of another, fairer, richer, nobler than herself? For, thought she, I was mad indeed to suppose that he would brave death for me. Ordener is the son of a viceroy, of a great lord, and I am nothing but a poor prisoner, nothing but the daughter of a proscribed and exiled man. He has left me, for he is free; and left me, no doubt, to wed his lovely betrothed,— the daughter of a chancellor, a minister, a haughty count! Has my Ordener deceived me, then? Oh, God! who would have thought that such a voice was capable of deceit?

And the wretched Ethel wept and wept again, and saw her Ordener before her, the man whom she had made the unwitting divinity of her whole being, that Ordener adorned with all the splendor of his rank, advancing to the altar amid festal preparations, and gazing upon her rival with the smile that had once been her delight.

However, in spite of her unspeakable agony, she never for an instant forgot her filial affection. The weak girl made the most heroic efforts to conceal her distress from her unfortunate father; for there is nothing more painful than to repress all outward signs of grief, and tears unshed are far more bitter than those that flow. Several days had passed before the silent old man observed the change in his Ethel, and

at his affectionate questions her long-repressed grief had at last burst forth.

For some time he watched her emotion with a bitter smile and a shake of the head; but at last he said: "Ethel, you do not live among men; why do you weep?"

He had scarcely finished these words, when the sweet and noble girl rose.

By a great effort, she checked her tears, and dried her eyes with her scarf, saying: "Father, forgive me; it was a momentary weakness." And she looked at him with an attempt to smile.

She went to the back of the room, found the Edda, seated herself by her taciturn father, and opened the book at random; then, mastering her voice, she began to read. But her useless task was unheeded by her and by the old man, who waved his hand.

"Enough, enough, my daughter!"

She closed the book.

"Ethel," added Schumacker, "do you ever think of Ordener?"

The young girl started in confusion.

"Yes," he continued, "of that Ordener who went —"

"Father," interrupted Ethel, "why should we trouble ourselves about him? I think as you do,— that he left us, never to return."

"Never to return, my daughter! I cannot have said such a thing. On the contrary, I have a strange presentiment that he will come back."

"That was not your opinion, father, when you spoke so distrustingly of the young man."

"Did I speak distrustfully of him?"

"Yes, father, and I agree with you; I think that he deceived us."

"That he deceived us, daughter! If I judged him thus, I acted like most men who condemn without proof. I have received nothing but professions of devotion from this Ordener."

"And how do you know, father, that those cordial words did not hide treacherous thoughts?"

"Usually men disregard misfortune and disgrace. If this Ordener were not attached to me, he would not have visited my prison without a purpose."

"Are you sure," replied Ethel, feebly, "that he had no purpose in coming here?"

"What could it be?" eagerly asked the old man.

Ethel was silent.

It was too great an effort for her to continue to accuse her beloved Ordener, whom she had formerly defended against her father.

"I am no longer Count Griffenfeld," he resumed. "I am no longer lord chancellor of Denmark and Norway, the favored dispenser of royal bounty, the all-powerful minister. I am a miserable prisoner of State, a proscribed man, to be shunned like one stricken with the plague. It shows courage even to mention my name without execration to the men whom I overwhelmed with honors and wealth; it shows devotion for a man to cross the threshold of this dungeon unless he be a jailer or an executioner; it shows heroism, my girl, for a man to cross it and call himself my friend. No; I will not be ungrateful, like the rest of humanity. That young man merits my gratitude, were it only for letting me see a kindly face and hear a consoling voice.

Ethel listened in agony to these words, which would have charmed her a few days earlier, when this Ordener was still cherished as her Ordener. The old man, after a brief pause, resumed in a solemn tone: "Listen to me, my daughter; for what I have to say to you is serious. I feel that I am fading slowly; my life is ebbing. Yes, daughter, my end is at hand."

Ethel interrupted him with a stifled groan.

"Oh God, father, say not so! For mercy's sake, spare your poor daughter! Alas! would you forsake me? What would become of me, alone in the world, if I were deprived of your protection?"

"The protection of a proscribed man!" said her father, shaking his head. "However, that is the very thing of which I have been thinking. Yes, your future happiness occupies me even more than my past misfortunes; hear me, therefore, and do not interrupt me again. This Ordener does not deserve that you should judge him so severely, my daughter, and I had not hitherto thought that you felt such dislike to him. His appearance is frank and noble, which proves nothing, truly; but I must say that he does not strike me as without merit, although it is enough that he has a human soul, for it to contain the seeds of every vice and every crime. There is no flame without smoke."

The old man again paused, and fixing his eyes upon his daughter, added: "Warned from within of approaching death, I have pondered much, Ethel; and if he return, as I hope he may, I shall make him your protector and husband."

Ethel trembled and turned pale; at the very moment when her dream of happiness had fled forever, her father strove to realize it. The bitter reflection, "I might have been happy!" revived all the violence of her despair. For some moments she was unable to speak, lest the burning tears which fillled her eyes should flow afresh.

Her father waited for her answer.

"What!" she said at last in a faint voice, "would you have chosen him for my husband, father, without knowing his birth, his family, his name?"

"I not only chose him, my daughter, I choose him still."

The old man's tone was almost imperious. Ethel sighed.

"I choose him for you, I say; and what is his birth to me? I do not care to know his family, since I know him. Think of it; he is the only anchor of salvation left to you. Fortunately, I believe that he does not feel the same aversion for you which you show for him."

The poor girl raised her eyes to heaven.

"You hear me, Ethel! I repeat, what is his birth to me? He is doubtless of obscure rank, for those born in

palaces are not taught to frequent prisons. Do not show such proud regret, my daughter; do not forget that Ethel Schumacker is no longer Princess of Wollin and Countess of Tönsberg. You have fallen lower than the point from which your father rose by his own efforts. Consider yourself happy if this man accept your hand, be his family what it may. If he be of humble birth, so much the better, my daughter; at least your days will be sheltered from the storms which have tormented your father. Far from the envy and hatred of men, under some unknown name, you will lead a modest existence, very different from mine, for its end will be better than its beginning."

Ethel fell on her knees.

"Oh, father, have mercy!"

He opened his arms to her in amazement.

"What do you mean, my daughter?"

"In Heaven's name, do not describe a happiness which is not for me!"

"Ethel," sternly answered the old man, "do not risk your whole life. I refused the hand of a princess of the blood royal, a princess of Holstein Augustenburg,— do you hear that? — and my pride was cruelly punished. You despise an obscure but loyal man; tremble lest yours be as sadly chastised."

"Would to Heaven," sighed Ethel, "that he were an obscure and loyal man!"

The old man rose, and paced the room in agitation. 'My daughter," said he, "your poor father implores and commands you. Do not let me die uncertain as to your future; promise me that you will accept this stranger as your husband."

"I will obey you always, father; but do not hope that he will return."

"I have weighed the probabilities, and I think from the tone in which Ordener uttered your name —"

"That he loves me!" bitterly interrupted Ethel. "Oh, no; do not believe it."

The father answered coldly: "I do not know whether to use your girlish expression, he loves you; but I know that he will return."

"Give up that idea, father; besides, you would not wish him for your son-in-law if you knew who he is."

"Ethel, he shall be my son-in-law, be his name and rank what they may."

"Well!" she replied, "how if this young man, whom you regard as your solace, whom you consider as your daughter's support, be the son of one of your mortal foes,— of the viceroy of Norway, Count Guldenlew?"

Schumacker started back.

"Heavens! what do you say? Ordener! that Ordener! It is impossible!"

The look of unutterable hatred which flashed from the old man's faded eyes froze Ethel's trembling heart, and she vainly repented the rash words which she had uttered.

The blow was struck. For a few moments Schumacker stood motionless, with folded arms; his whole body quivered as if laid upon live coals; his flaming eyes started from their sockets; and his gaze, riveted to the pavement, seemed as if it would pierce the stones. At last these words issued from his livid lips in a voice as faint as that of a man who dreams. "Ordener! Yes, it must be so; Ordener Guldenlew! It is well. Come, Schumacker, old fool, open your arms to him; the loyal youth has come to stab you to the heart."

Suddenly he stamped upon the ground, and went on in tones of thunder:

"So they send their whole infamous race to insult me in my disgrace and captivity! I have already seen a d'Ahlefeld; I almost smiled upon a Guldenlew! Monsters! Who would ever have thought that this Ordener possessed such a soul and bore such a name? Wretched me! Wretched he!"

Then he fell exhausted into his chair, and while his breast heaved with sighs, poor Ethel, trembling with fright, wept at his feet.

"Do not weep, my daughter," said he, in gloomy tones "come, oh, come to my heart!"

And he clasped her in his arms.

Ethel knew not how to explain this caress at a moment of rage, but he resumed: "At least, girl, you were more clear-sighted than your old father. You were not deceived by that serpent with gentle but venomous eyes. Come! let me thank you for the hatred which you have shown me that you feel for that contemptible Ordener."

She shuddered at these praises, alas! so ill-deserved.

"Father," said she, "be calm!"

"Promise me," added Schumacker, "that you will always retain the same feeling for the son of Guldenlew. Swear it!"

"God forbids us to swear, father."

"Swear, swear, girl!" vehemently repeated Schumacker. "Will you always retain the same feeling for Ordener Guldenlew?"

Ethel had scarcely strength to falter, "Always."

The old man drew her to his heart.

"It is well, my daughter! Let me at least bequeath to you my hate, if I cannot leave you the wealth and honors of which I was robbed. Listen! they deprived your old father of rank and glory; they dragged him in irons to the gallows, as if to stain him with every infamy and make him endure every torment. Wretches! Oh, may heaven and hell hear me, and may they be cursed in this life and cursed in their posterity!"

He was silent for a moment; then, embracing his poor daughter, terrified by his curses: "But Ethel, my only glory and my only treasure, tell me, how was your instinct so much more skilful than mine? How did you discover that this traitor bears one of the abhorred names inscribed upon my heart in gall? How did you penetrate his secret?"

She was summoning all her strength to answer, when the door opened.

A man dressed in black, carrying in his hand an ebony

wand, and wearing about his neck a chain of unpolished steel, appeared upon the threshold, escorted by halberdiers also dressed in black.

"What do you want?" asked the captive, sharply, and in astonishment.

The man, without replying or looking at him, unrolled a long parchment, to which was fastened by silken threads a seal of green wax, and read aloud: "In the name of his Majesty, our most gracious sovereign and lord, Christian the king. Schumacker, prisoner of State in the royal fortress of Munkholm, and his daughter, are commanded to follow the bearer of the said command."

Schumacker repeated his question: "What do you want?"

The man in black, still immovable, prepared to re-read the document.

"That will do," said the old man.

Then, rising, he signed to the surprised and startled Ethel to follow with him this dismal escort.

XLI

A doleful signal was given, an abject minister of justice knocked at his door and informed him that he was wanted.— Joseph de Maistre.

NIGHT had fallen; a cold wind whistled around the Cursed Tower, and the doors of Vygla ruin rattled on their hinges, as if the same hand had shaken all of them at once.

The wild inhabitants of the tower, the hangman and his family, had gathered about the fire lighted in the middle of the room on the first floor, which cast a fitful glow upon their dark faces and scarlet garments. The children's features were fierce as their father's laughter and haggard as their mother's gaze. Their eyes, as well as those of Becky were fixed on Orugix, who, seated on a wooden stool, seemed to be

recovering his breath, his feet covered with dust, showing that he had but just returned from some distant trip.

"Wife, listen; listen, children. I've not been gone two whole days merely to bring back bad news. If I am not made executioner to the king before another month is out, I wish I may never tie another slip-noose or handle an axe again. Rejoice, my little wolf-cubs; your father may leave you the Copenhagen scaffold by way of an inheritance, after all."

"Nychol," asked Becky, "what has happened?"

"And you, my old gypsy," rejoined Nychol, with his boisterous laugh, "rejoice too! You can buy any number of blue glass necklaces to adorn your long, skinny neck. Our agreement will soon be up; but never fear, in a month, when you see me chief hangman of both kingdoms, you will not refuse to break another jug with me." [1]

"What is it, what is it, father?" asked the children, the older of whom was playing with a bloody rack, while the little one amused himself by plucking alive a young bird which he had stolen from the nest.

"What is it, children? — Kill that bird, Haspar; it makes as much noise as a rusty saw; and besides you should never be cruel. Kill it.— What is it, you say? Nothing,— a trifle, truly; nothing, dame Becky, save that within a week from this time ex-chancellor Schumacker, who is a prisoner at Munkholm, after looking me so closely in the face at Copenhagen, and the famous brigand of Iceland, Hans of Klipstadur, may perhaps both pass through my hands at once."

The red woman's wandering eye assumed an expression of surprised curiosity.

"Schumacker! Hans of Iceland! How is that, Nychol?"

"I'll tell you all about it. Yesterday morning, on the road to Skongen, at Ordals bridge, I met the whole regiment of musketeers from Munkholm marching back to Throndhjem

[1] The Gypsy form of marriage.

with a very victorious air. I questioned one of the soldiers, who condescended to answer, probably because he did not know why my jerkin and my cart were red. I learned that the musketeers were returning from Black Pillar Pass, where they had cut to pieces various bands of brigands,— that is to say, insurgent miners. Now, you must know, gypsy Becky, that these rebels revolted in Schumacker's name, and were commanded by Hans of Iceland. You must know that his uprising renders Hans of Iceland guilty of the crime of insurrection against royal authority, and Schumacker guilty of high treason, which will naturally lead those two honorable gentlemen to the scaffold or the block. Add to these two superb executions, which cannot fail to bring me in at least fifteen gold ducats each, and to entitle me to the greatest honor in both kingdoms, several other though less important ones —"

"But do tell me," interrupted Becky, "has Hans of Iceland been captured?"

"Why do you interrupt your lord and master, miserable woman?" said the hangman. "Yes, to be sure, the famous, the impregnable Hans of Iceland is a prisoner, together with several other leaders of the brigands, his lieutenants, who will also bring me in twelve crowns apiece, to say nothing of the sale of their bodies. He was captured, I tell you; and I saw him, if you must know all the particulars, march by between a double file of soldiers."

The woman and children crowded eagerly about Orugix.

"What! did you really see him, father?" asked the children.

"Be quiet, boys. You shriek like a rogue protesting his innocence. I saw him; he is a giant. His hands were tied behind his back, and his forehead was bandaged. I suppose he was wounded in the head. But never fear, I will soon heal his hurt for him." Accompanying these brutal words with a brutal gesture, the hangman added: "There were four of his comrades behind him, prisoners too and wounded, like him, who were being taken, like him, to Throndhjem, where they

are to be tried with ex-chancellor Schumacker by a court of justice presided over by the lord mayor and the present chancellor."

"Father, what did the other prisoners look like?"

"The first two were a couple of old men, one of whom wore a miner's broad felt hat, and the other a mountaineer's cap; both seemed utterly disheartened. Of the other two, one was a young miner, who marched along with head up, whistling; the other,— do you remember, Becky, those travellers who came to this tower some ten days ago, on the night of that terrible storm?"

"As Satan remembers the day of his fall," replied the woman.

"Did you notice a young man in company with that crazy old doctor with the big periwig,— a young fellow, I say, who wore a great green cloak, and a cap with a black feather?"

"Yes, indeed; I can see him now, saying: 'Woman, we have plenty of gold!'"

"Well, old woman, I hope I may never wring the neck of anything worse than a grouse, if the fourth prisoner was not that young man. His face, to be sure, was entirely hidden by his feather, his cap, his hair, and his cloak; besides, he hung his head. But it was the very same dress, the same boots, the same manner. I'll swallow the stone gallows at Skongen at a single mouthful if it be not the same man! What do you say to that, Becky? Wouldn't it be a joke if after I had given him something to sustain life he should also receive from me something to cut it short, and should exercise my skill after having tasted my hospitality?"

The hangman's coarse laughter was loud and long; then he resumed: "Come, make merry, all of you, and let us drink. Yes, Becky, give me a glass of that beer which scrapes a man's throat as if he were drinking files, and let me drain it to my future advancement. Come, here's to the health and prosperity of Nychol Orugix, executioner royal that is to be! I wil confess, you old sinner, that I found it hard work to go to Nœs village to hang a contemptible clown for steal-

ing cabbage and chicory. Still, when I thought it over, I felt that thirty-two escalins were not to be sneezed at, and that my hands would not be degraded by turning off mere thieves and riff-raff of that kind until after they had actually beheaded the noble count and ex-chancellor, and the famous demon of Iceland. I therefore resigned myself, while waiting for my certificate as hangman to the king, to despatch the poor wretch at Nœs village. And here," he added, drawing a leather purse from his wallet, "are the thirty-two escalins for you, old girl."

At this moment three blasts from a horn were heard outside.

"Woman," cried Orugix, "those are the bowmen of the lord mayor."

With these words he hurried downstairs.

An instant later he reappeared, carrying a large parchment, of which he had broken the seal.

"There," said he to his wife, "there's what the lord mayor has sent me. Do you decipher it; for you can read Satan's scrawl. Perhaps it is my promotion already; for since the court is to have a chancellor to preside over it and a chancellor as prisoner at the bar, it is only proper that the man who carries out the sentence should be an executioner royal."

The woman took the parchment, and after studying it for some time, read aloud, while the children stared at her in stupid wonder: "In the name of the Council of the province of Throndhjem, Nychol Orugix, hangman for the province, is hereby ordered to repair at once to Throndhjem, and to carry with him his best axe, block, and black hangings."

"Is that all?" asked the hangman, in a dissatisfied tone.

"That is all," replied Becky.

"Hangman for the province!" muttered Orugix.

He cast an angry glance at the official document, but at last exclaimed: "Well, I must obey and be off. After all, they tell me to bring my best axe and the black hangings. Take care, Becky, that you rub off the spots of rust which have dimmed my axe, and see that the hangings are not

stained with blood. We must not be discouraged; perhaps they mean to promote me in payment for this fine execution. So much the worse for the prisoners; they will not have the satisfaction of dying by the hand of an executioner royal."

XLII

Elvira. What has become of poor Sancho? He has not appeared in town?

Nuno. Sancho has doubtless contrived to find shelter.

LOPE DE VEGA: *The Best Alcalde is the King.*

COUNT D'AHLEFELD, dragging behind him an ample robe of black satin lined with ermine, his head and shoulders concealed by a large judicial wig, his breast covered with stars and decorations, among which were the collars of the Royal Orders of the Elephant and the Dannebrog, clad, in a word, in the complete costume of the lord chancellor of Denmark and Norway, paced with an anxious air up and down the apartment of Countess d'Ahlefeld, who was alone with him at the moment.

"Come, it is nine o'clock; the court is about to open; it must not be kept waiting, for sentence must be pronounced to-night, so that it may be carried out by to-morrow morning at latest. The mayor assures me that the hangman will be here before dawn. Elphega, did you order the boat to take me to Munkholm?"

"My lord, it has been waiting for you at least half an hour," replied the countess, rising from her seat.

"And is my litter at the door?"

"Yes, my lord."

"Good! So you say, Elphega," added the count, clapping his hand to his head, "that there is a love-affair between Ordener Guldenlew and Schumacker's daughter?"

"A very serious one, I assure you," replied the countess, with a smile of anger and contempt.

"Who would ever have imagined it? And yet I tell you that I suspected it."

"And so did I," said the countess. "This is a trick played upon us by that confounded Levin."

"Old scamp of a Mecklenburger!" muttered the chancellor; "never fear, I'll recommend you to Arensdorf. If I could only succeed in disgracing him! Ah! see here, Elphega, I have an inspiration."

"What is it?"

"You know that the persons whom we are to try at Munkholm Castle are six in number,— Schumacker, whom I hope I shall have no further cause to fear, to-morrow, at this hour; the colossal mountaineer, our false Hans of Iceland, who has sworn to sustain his character to the end, in the hope that Musdœmon, from whom he has already received large sums of money, will help him to escape,— that Musdœmon really has the most devilish ideas! The other four prisoners are the three rebel chiefs, and a certain unknown character, who stumbled, no one knows how, into the midst of the assembly at Apsyl-Corh, and whom Musdœmon's precautions have thrown into our hands. Musdœmon thinks that the fellow is a spy of Levin de Knud. And indeed, when brought here a prisoner, his first words were to ask for the general; and when he learned of the Mecklenburger's absence, he seemed dumfounded. Moreover, he has refused to answer any of Musdœmon's questions."

"My dear lord," interrupted the countess, "why have you not questioned him yourself?"

"Really, Elphega, how could I, in the midst of all the business which has overwhelmed me since my arrival? I trusted the affair to Musdœmon, whom it interests as much as it does me. Besides, my dear, the fellow is not of the slightest consequence in himself; he is merely some poor vagabond. We can only turn him to account by representing him to be an agent of Levin de Knud, and as he was captured in

the rebel ranks, it would go to prove a guilty connivance between Schumacker and the Mecklenburger, which will suffice to bring about, if not the arraignment, at least the disgrace, of that confounded Levin."

The countess meditated for a moment. "You are right, my lord. But how about this fatal passion of Baron Thorwick for Ethel Schumacker?"

The chancellor again rubbed his head. Then, shrugging his shoulders, he said: "See here, Elphega; neither you nor I are young novices, and we ought to understand men. When Schumacker has been condemned for high treason for the second time; when he has undergone an infamous death on the gallows; when his daughter, reduced to the lowest ranks of society, is forever publicly disgraced by her father's shame, — do you suppose, Elphega, that Ordener Guldenlew will then recall for a single instant this childish flirtation which you call passion, judging it by the extravagant talk of a crazy girl, or that he will hesitate a single day between the dishonored daughter of a wretched criminal and the illustrious daughter of a great chancellor? We must judge others by ourselves; where do you find that the human heart is so constituted?"

"I trust that you may be right. But I think you will not disapprove of my request to the mayor that Schumacker's daughter might be present at her father's trial, and might be placed in the same gallery with me. I am curious to study the creature."

"All that can throw light upon the affair is valuable," said the chancellor, calmly. "But tell me, does anybody know where Ordener is at present?"

"No one knows; he is the worthy pupil of that old Levin, a knight-errant like him. I believe that he is visiting Wardhus just now."

"Well, well, our Ulrica will settle him. But come, I forget that the court is waiting for me."

The countess detained the chancellor. "One word more, my lord. I asked you yesterday, but your mind was full

of other things, and I could not get an answer,— where is my Frederic? "

" Frederic! " said the count, with a melancholy expression, and hiding his face with his hand.

" Yes, answer me; my Frederic? His regiment has returned to Throndhjem without him. Swear to me that Frederic was not in that horrible affair at Black Pillar Pass. Why do you change color at his name? I am in mortal terror."

The chancellor's features resumed their wonted composure. " Make yourself easy, Elphega. I swear that he was not at Black Pillar Pass. Besides, the list of officers killed or wounded in that skirmish has been published."

" Yes," said the countess, growing calmer, " you reassure me. Only two officers were killed,— Captain Lory and that young Baron Randmer, who played so many mad pranks with my poor Frederic at the Copenhagen balls. Oh, I have read and re-read the list, I assure you. But tell me, my lord, did my boy remain at Wahlstrom? "

" He did," replied the count.

" Well, my friend," said the mother, with a smile which she tried to render affectionate, " I have but one favor to ask of you,— that is, to recall Frederic as soon as may be from that frightful region."

The chancellor broke from her suppliant arms, saying, " Madam, the court waits. Farewell. What you ask does not depend on my will." And he quitted the room abruptly.

The countess was left in a sad and pensive mood. " It does not depend upon his will! " said she; " and he has but to utter a word to restore my son to my arms! I always thought that man was genuinely bad."

XLIII

Is it thus you treat a man in my position? Is it thus you forget the respect due to justice? — CALDERON: *Louis Perez of Galicia.*

THE trembling Ethel, separated from her father by the guards upon leaving the Lion of Schleswig tower, was conducted through dim passages, hitherto unknown to her, to a small dark cell which was closed as soon as she had entered it. In the wall opposite the door was a large grated opening through which came the light of links and torches. Before this opening was a bench upon which sat a woman, veiled and dressed in black, who signed to her to be seated beside her. Ethel obeyed in silent dismay. She looked through the grated window and saw a solemn and imposing scene.

At the farther end of a room hung with black and dimly lighted by copper lamps suspended from the vaulted roof, was a black platform in the shape of a horseshoe, occupied by seven judges in black gowns, one of whom placed in the centre upon a higher seat, wore on his breast glittering diamond chains and gold medals. The judge on his right differed from the others in the wearing of a white girdle and an ermine mantle, showing him to be the lord mayor of the province. To the right of the bench was a platform covered with a daïs, upon which sat an old man, in bishop's dress; to the left, a table covered with papers, behind which stood a short man with a huge wig, and enveloped in a long black gown.

Opposite the judges was a wooden bench, surrounded by halberdiers holding torches, whose light, reflected back from a forest of pikes, muskets, and partisans, shed a faint glimmer upon the tumultuous heads of a mob of spectators, crowded against the iron railing dividing them from the court-room.

Ethel looked at this spectacle as she might have beheld some waking dream; yet she was far from feeling indifferent to what was about to happen. A secret voice warned her to listen well, because a crisis in her life was at hand. Her heart was a prey to contending emotions; she longed to know instantly what interest she had in the scene before her, or never to know it at all. For some days, the idea that her Ordener was forever lost to her had inspired her with a desperate desire to be done with existence once for all, and to read the book of her fate at a single glance. Therefore, realizing that this was a decisive hour, she watched the sombre picture before her, not so much with aversion as with a sort of impatient, melancholy joy.

She saw the president rise and proclaim in the king's name that the court was opened.

She heard the short, dark man to the left of the bench read, in a low, rapid voice, a long discourse in which her father's name, mixed with the words "conspiracy," "revolt in the mines," and "high treason," frequently recurred. Then she remembered what the dread stranger had told her, in the donjon garden, of the charges against her father; and she shuddered as she heard the man in the black robe conclude his speech with the word "death," pronounced with great emphasis.

She turned in terror to the veiled lady, from whom she shrank with unaccountable fear. "Where are we? What does all this mean?" she timidly asked.

A gesture from her mysterious companion commanded her to be silent and attentive. She again turned her eyes to the court-room. The venerable bishop rose, and Ethel caught these words: "In the name of omnipotent and most merciful God, I, Pamphilus-Luther, bishop of the royal province and town of Throndhjem, do greet the worthy court assembled here in the name of the king, our lord, under God."

"And I say, that having observed that the prisoners brought to this bar are men and Christians, and that they have no counsel, I declare to the worthy judges that it is my

purpose to aid them with my poor strength in the cruel position in which it has pleased Heaven to place them.

"Praying that God will deign to strengthen my great weakness, and enlighten my great blindness, I, bishop of this royal diocese, greet this wise and worthy court."

So saying, the bishop stepped from his episcopal throne, and took his seat upon the prisoners' bench, amid a murmur of applause from the people.

The president then rose, and said in dry tones, "Halberdiers, command silence! My lord bishop, the court thanks your reverence, in the name of the prisoners. Inhabitants of the province of Throndhjem, pay good heed to the king's justice; there can be no appeal from the sentence of the court. Bowmen, bring in the prisoners."

There was an expectant and terrified hush; the heads of the crowd swayed to and fro in the darkness like the waves of a stormy sea, upon which the thunder is about to burst.

Soon Ethel heard a dull sound and a strange stir below her, in the gloomy aisles of the court; the audience moved aside with a thrill of impatient curiosity; there was a noise of many feet; halberds and muskets gleamed, and six men, chained and surrounded by guards, entered the room bareheaded. Ethel had eyes for the first of the six alone, a white-headed old man in a black gown. It was her father.

She leaned, almost fainting, against the stone balustrade in front of her; everything swam before her in a confused cloud, and it seemed as if her heart were in her throat. She said in a feeble voice, "O God! help me!"

The veiled woman bent over her and gave her salts to smell, which roused her from her lethargy.

"Noble lady," said she, reviving, "for mercy's sake, speak but one word to convince me that I am not the sport of spirits from hell."

The stranger, deaf to her entreaty, again turned her head toward the court; and poor Ethel, who had somewhat recovered her strength, resigned herself to do the same in silence.

The president rose and said in slow, solemn tones, "Prisoners, you are brought before us that we may decide whether or not you are guilty of high treason, conspiracy, and armed rebellion against the authority of the king, our sovereign lord. Examine your consciences well, for the charge of lezemajesty rests upon your heads."

At this moment a gleam of light fell upon the face of one of the six prisoners, a young man who held his head down, as if to veil his features with his long hair. Ethel started, and a cold sweat oozed from every pore. She thought she recognized — But no; it was a cruel illusion. The room was but dimly lighted, and men moved about it like shadows; the great polished ebony Christ hanging over the president's chair was scarcely visible.

And yet that young man was wrapped in a mantle which at this distance seemed to be green; his disordered hair was chestnut, and the unexpected gleam which revealed his features — But no; it was not true. It could not be! It was some horrid delusion!

The prisoners were seated on the bench beside the bishop. Schumacker took his place at one end; he was separated from the chestnut-haired young man by his four companions in misfortune, who wore coarse clothes, and among whom was one of gigantic stature. The bishop sat at the other end of the bench.

Ethel saw the president turn to her father, saying in a stern voice: "Old man, tell us your name, and who you are."

The old man raised his venerable head.

"Once," he replied, looking steadily at the president, "I was Count Griffenfeld and Tönsberg, Prince of Wollin, Prince of the Holy German Empire, Knight of the Royal Orders of the Elephant and the Dannebrog, Knight of the Golden Fleece in Germany and of the Garter in England, Prime Minister, Lord Rector of all our Universities, Lord High Chancellor of Denmark, and —"

The president interrupted him: "Prisoner, the court does

not ask who you were, nor what your name once was, but who you are and what it now is."

"Well," answered the old man, quickly, "my name is John Schumacker now; I am sixty-nine years old, and I am nothing but your former benefactor, Chancellor d'Ahlefeld."

The president seemed confused.

"I recognized you, Count," added the ex-chancellor, "and as I thought you did not know me, I took the liberty to remind your Grace that we are old acquaintances."

"Schumacker," said the president, in a voice trembling with concentrated fury, "do not trifle with the court."

The aged prisoner again interrupted him: "We have changed places, noble Chancellor; I used to call you 'd'Ahlefeld,' and you addressed me as 'Count.'"

"Prisoner," replied the president, "you only injure your cause by recalling the infamous decree which already brands your name."

"If that sentence entailed infamy on any one, Count d'Ahlefeld, it was not on me."

The old man half rose as he spoke these words with great emphasis.

The president waved his hand.

"Sit down. Do not insult, in the presence of the court, the judges who condemned you, and the king who surrendered you to those judges. Recollect that his Majesty deigned to grant you your life, and confine yourself to defending it."

Schumacker's only answer was a shrug of the shoulders.

"Have you," asked the president, "anything to say in regard to the charges preferred against you?"

Seeing that Schumacker was silent, the president repeated his question.

"Are you speaking to me?" said the ex-chancellor. "I supposed, noble Count d'Ahlefeld, that you were speaking to yourself. Of what crime do you accuse me? Did I ever give a Judas kiss to a friend? Have I imprisoned, condemned, and dishonored a benefactor,— robbed him to whom I owed everything? In truth, my lord chancellor, I know not

why I am brought here. Doubtless it is to judge of your skill in lopping off innocent heads. Indeed, I shall not be sorry to see whether you find it as easy to ruin me as to ruin the kingdom, and whether a single comma will be a sufficient pretext for my death, as one letter of the alphabet was enough for you to bring on a war with Sweden." [1]

He had scarcely uttered this bitter jest, when the man seated at the table to the left of the bench arose.

"My lord president," said he, bowing low, "my lord judges, I move that John Schumacker be forbidden to speak, if he continue to insult his Grace, the president of this worshipful court."

The calm voice of the bishop answered: "Mr. Private Secretary, no prisoner can be deprived of the right to speak."

"True, Reverend Bishop," hastily exclaimed the president. "We propose to allow the defence the utmost liberty. I would merely advise the prisoner to moderate his expressions if he understands his own interest."

Schumacker shook his head, and said coldly: "It seems that Count d'Ahlefeld is more sure of his game than he was in 1677."

"Silence!" said the president; and instantly addressing the prisoner next to the old man, he asked his name.

A mountaineer of colossal stature, whose forehead was swathed in bandages, rose, saying, "I am Hans, from Klipstadur, in Iceland."

A shudder of horror ran through the crowd, and Schumacker, lifting his head, which had sunk upon his breast, cast a sudden glance at his dreadful neighbor, from whom all his other fellow-prisoners shrank.

[1] There were grave differences between Denmark and Sweden, because Count d'Ahlefeld insisted, during the negotiation of a treaty between the two States, that the Danish king should be addressed as *rex Gothorum*, which apparently attributed to him supremacy over Gothland, a Swedish province; while the Swedes persisted in styling him *rex Gotorum*, a vague title, equivalent to the ancient name of Danish sovereigns,— King of the Goths. It is probably to this "h"— the cause not of a war, but of long and threatening negotiations — that Schumacker alluded.

"Hans of Iceland," asked the president, when the confusion ceased, "what have you to say for yourself?"

Ethel was as much startled as any of the spectators by the appearance of the famous brigand, who had so long played a prominent part in all her visions of alarm. She fixed her eyes with timid dread upon the monstrous giant, with whom her Ordener had possibly fought, whose victim he perhaps was. This idea again took possession of her soul in all its painful shapes. Thus, wholly absorbed by countless heart-rending emotions, she hardly heeded the coarse, blundering answer of this Hans of Iceland, whom she regarded almost as her Ordener's murderer. She only understood that the brigand declared himself to be the leader of the rebel forces.

"Was it of your own free will," asked the president, "or by the suggestion of others, that you took command of the insurgents?"

The brigand answered: "It was not of my own free will."

"Who persuaded you to commit such a crime?"

"A man named Hacket."

"Who was this Hacket?"

"An agent of Schumacker, whom he also called Count Griffenfeld."

The president turned to Schumacker: "Schumacker, do you know this Hacket?"

"You have forestalled me, Count d'Ahlefeld," rejoined the old man; "I was about to ask you the same question."

"John Schumacker," said the president, "your hatred is ill advised. The court will put the proper value upon your system of defence."

The bishop then said, turning to the short man, who seemed to fill the office of recorder and prosecutor: "Mr. Private Secretary, is this Hacket one of your clients?"

"No, your reverence," replied the secretary.

"Does any one know what has become of him?"

"He was not captured; he has disappeared."

It seemed as if the private secretary tried to steady his voice as he said this.

"I rather think that he has vanished altogether," said Schumacker.

The bishop continued: "Mr. Secretary, is any one in pursuit of this Hacket? Has any one a description of him?"

Before the private secretary could answer, one of the prisoners rose. He was a young miner, with a stern, proud face.

"He is easily described," said he, in a firm voice. "This contemptible Hacket, Schumacker's agent, is a man of low stature, with an open countenance, like the mouth of hell. Stay, Mr. Bishop; his voice is very like that of the gentleman writing at the table over there, whom your reverence calls, I believe, 'private secretary.' And truly, if the room were not so dark, and the private secretary had less hair to hide his face, I could almost swear that he looked very much like the traitor Hacket."

"Our brother speaks truly," cried the prisoners on either side of the young miner.

"Indeed!" muttered Schumacker, with a look of triumph.

The secretary involuntarily started, whether from fear, or from the indignation which he felt at being compared to Hacket. The president, who himself seemed disturbed, hurriedly exclaimed: "Prisoners, remember that you are only to speak in answer to a question from the court; and do not insult the officers of the law by unworthy comparisons."

"But, Mr. President," said the bishop, "this is a mere matter of description. If the guilty Hacket has points of resemblance to your secretary, it may be useful to —"

The president cut him short.

"Hans of Iceland, you, who have had such frequent intercourse with Hacket, tell us, to satisfy the worthy bishop, whether the fellow really resembles our honorable private secretary."

"Not at all, sir," unhesitatingly answered the giant.

"You see, my lord bishop," added the president.

The bishop acknowledged his satisfaction by a bow, and the president, addressing another prisoner, pronounced the usual formula: "What is your name?"

"Wilfred Kennybol, from the Kiölen Mountains."

"Were you among the insurgents?"

"Yes, sir; the truth at all costs. I was captured in the cursed defile of Black Pillar. I was the chief of the mountaineers."

"Who urged you to the crime of rebellion?"

"Our brothers the miners complained of the royal protectorate; and that was very natural, was it not, your worship? If you had nothing but a mud hut and a couple of paltry fox-skins, you would not like to have them taken from you. The government would not listen to their petitions. Then, sir, they made up their minds to rebel, and begged us to help them. Such a slight favor could not be refused by brothers who say the same prayers and worship the same saints. That's the whole story."

"Did nobody," said the president, "excite, encourage, and direct your insurrection?"

"There was a Mr. Hacket, who was forever talking to us about rescuing a count who was imprisoned at Munkholm, whose messenger he said he was. We promised to do as he asked, because it was nothing to us to set one more captive free."

"Was not this count's name Schumacker or Griffenfeld, fellow?"

"Exactly so, your worship."

"Did you never see him?"

"No, sir; but if he be that old man who told you that he had so many names just now, I must confess —"

"What?" interrupted the president.

"That he has a very beautiful white beard, sir; almost as handsome a one as my sister Maase's husband's father, of the village of Surb; and he lived to be one hundred and twenty years old."

The darkness of the room prevented any one from seeing whether the president looked disappointed at the mountaineer's simple answer. He ordered the archers to produce certain scarlet flags.

"Wilfred Kennybol," he asked, "do you recognize these flags?"

"Yes, your Grace; they were given to us by Hacket in Count Schumacker's name. The count also distributed arms to the miners; for we did not need them, we mountaineers, who live by our gun and game-bag. And I myself, sir, such as you see me, trussed as I am like a miserable fowl to be roasted, have more than once, in one of our deep valleys, brought down an old eagle flying so high that it looked like a lark or a thrush."

"You hear, judges," remarked the private secretary; "the prisoner Schumacker distributed arms and banners to the rebels, through Hacket."

"Kennybol," asked the president, "have you anything more to say?"

"Nothing, your Grace, except that I do not deserve death. I only lent a hand in brotherly love to the miners, and I'll venture to say before all your worships that my bullet, old hunter as I am, never touched one of the king's deer."

The president, without answering this plea, cross-examined Kennybol's two companions; they were the leaders of the miners. The older of the two, who stated that his name was Jonas, repeated Kennybol's testimony in slightly different words. The other,— the same young man who had noticed such a strong resemblance between the private secretary and the treacherous Hacket,— called himself Norbith, and proudly avowed his share in the rebellion, but refused to reveal anything regarding Hacket and Schumacker, saying that he had sworn secrecy, and had forgotten everything but that oath. In vain the president tried threats and entreaties; the obstinate youth was not to be moved. Moreover, he insisted that he had not rebelled on Schumacker's account, but simply because his old mother was cold and hungry. He

did not deny that he might deserve to die; but he declared that it would be unjust to kill him, because in killing him they would also kill his poor mother, who had done nothing to merit punishment.

When Norbith ceased speaking, the private secretary briefly summed up the heavy charges against the prisoners, and more especially against Schumacker. He read some of the seditious mottoes on the flags, and showed how the general agreement of the answers of the ex-chancellor's accomplices, and even the silence of Norbith bound by a fanatical oath, tended to inculpate him. "There now remains," he said in close, "but a single prisoner to be examined, and we have strong reasons for thinking him the secret agent of the authority who has ill protected the peace of the province of Throndhjem. This authority has favored, if not by his guilty connivance, at least by his fatal negligence, the outbreak of the revolt which must destroy all these unhappy man, and restore Schumacker to the scaffold from which the king's clemency so generously preserved him."

Ethel, whose fears for Ordener were now converted into cruel apprehensions for her father, shuddered at these ominous words, and wept floods of tears when her father rose and said quietly: "Chancellor d'Ahlefeld, I admire your skill. Have you summoned the hangman?"

The unfortunate girl thought her cup of bitterness was full: she was mistaken.

The sixth prisoner now stood up. With a superb gesture he swept back the hair which covered his face, and replied to the president's questions in a clear, firm voice: "My name is Ordener Guldenlew, Baron Thorwick, Knight of the Dannebrog."

An exclamation of surprise escaped the secretary: "The viceroy's son!"

"The viceroy's son!" repeated every voice, as if the words were taken up by countless echoes.

The president shrank back in his seat; the judges, hitherto motionless upon the bench, bent toward one another in

confusion, like trees beaten by opposing winds. The commotion was even greater in the audience. The spectators climbed upon stone cornices and iron rails; the entire assembly spoke through a single mouth; and the guards, forgetting to insist upon silence, added their ejaculations to the general uproar.

Only those accustomed to sudden emotions can imagine Ethel's feelings. Who could describe that unwonted mixture of agonizing joy and delicious grief; that anxious expectation, which was alike fear and hope, and yet not quite either? He stood before her, but he could not see her. There was her beloved Ordener,— her Ordener,— whom she had believed dead, whom she knew was lost to her; her friend who had deceived her, and whom she adored with renewed adoration. He was there; yes, he was there. She was not the victim of a vain dream. Oh, it was really he,— that Ordener, alas! whom she had seen in dreams more often than in reality. But did he appear within these gloomy precincts as an angel of deliverance, or a spirit of evil? Was she to hope in him, or to tremble for him? A thousand conjectures crowded upon her at once, and oppressed her mind like a flame choked by too much fuel; all the ideas and sensations which we have suggested flashed through her brain as the son of the Norwegian viceroy pronounced his name. She was the first to recognize him, and before any one else had recognized him, she had fainted.

She soon recovered her senses for the second time, thanks to the attentions of her mysterious neighbor. With pale cheeks, she again opened her eyes, in which the tears had been suddenly dried. She cast an eager glance at the young man still standing unmoved amid the general confusion; and after all agitation had ceased in the court and among the people, Ordener Guldenlew's name still rang in her ears. With painful alarm she observed that he wore his arm in a sling, and that his wrists were chained; she noticed that his mantle was torn in several places, and that his faithful sword no longer hung at his side. Nothing escaped her solicitude,

for the eye of a lover is like that of a mother. Her whole soul flew to the rescue of him whom she could not shield with her body; and, be it said to the glory and the shame of love, in that room, which contained her father and her father's persecutors, Ethel saw but one man.

Silence was gradually restored. The president resumed his examination of the viceroy's son. "My lord Baron," said he, in a tremulous voice.

"I am not 'my lord Baron' here," firmly answered Ordener. "I am Ordener Guldenlew, just as he who was once Count Griffenfeld is John Schumacker here."

The president hesitated for a moment, then went on: "Well, Ordener Guldenlew, it is doubtless by some unlucky accident that you are brought before us. The rebels must have captured you while you were travelling, and forced you to join them, and it is probably in this way that you were found in their ranks."

The secretary rose: "Noble judges, the mere name of the viceroy's son is a sufficient plea for him. Baron Ordener Guldenlew cannot by any possibility be a rebel. Our illustrious president has given a clear explanation of his unfortunate arrest among the rebels. The noble prisoner's only error is in not sooner revealing his name. We request that he may be set free at once, abandoning all charges against him, and only regretting that he should have been seated upon a bench degraded by the criminal Schumacker and his accomplices."

"What would you do?" cried Ordener.

"The private secretary," said the president, "withdraws the charges against you."

"He is wrong," replied Ordener, in a loud, clear voice; "I alone of all here should be accused, judged, and condemned." He paused a moment, and added in a less resolute tone, "For I alone am guilty."

"You alone guilty!" exclaimed the president.

"You alone guilty!" repeated the secretary.

A fresh burst of astonishment was heard in the audience.

The wretched Ethel shuddered; she did not reflect that this declaration from her lover would save her father. She thought only of her Ordener's death.

"Silence in the court!" said the president, possibly taking advantage of this brief tumult to collect his thoughts and recover his self-possession. "Ordener Guldenlew," he resumed, "explain yourself."

The young man mused an instant, then sighed heavily, and uttered these words in a tone of calm submission: "Yes, I know that an infamous death awaits me; I know that my life might have been bright and fair. But God reads my heart; God alone! I am about to accomplish the most urgent duty of my life. I am about to sacrifice to it my blood, perhaps my honor; but I feel that I shall die without regret or remorse. Do not be surprised at my words, judges; there are mysteries in the soul and in the destiny of man which men cannot penetrate, and which are judged in heaven alone. Hear me, therefore, and act toward me as your conscience may dictate when you have pardoned these unfortunate men, and more especially the much injured Schumacker, who has already, in his long captivity, expiated many more crimes than any one man could ever commit. Yes, I am guilty, noble judges, and I alone. Schumacker is innocent; these other unhappy men were merely led astray. I am the author of the insurrection among the miners."

"You!" exclaimed the president and his private secretary, with a singular look upon their faces.

"I! and do not interrupt me again, gentlemen. I am in haste to finish; for by accusing myself I exonerate these poor prisoners. I excited the miners in Schumacker's name; I distributed those banners to the rebels; I sent them money and arms in the name of the prisoner of Munkholm. Hacket was my agent."

At the name of Hacket, the private secretary made a gesture of stupefied amazement.

Ordener continued: "I will not trespass on your time, gentlemen. I was captured among the miners, whom I per-

suaded to revolt. I alone did everything. Now judge me. If I have proved my guilt, I have also proved the innocence of Schumacker and the poor wretches whom you deem his accomplices."

The young man spoke these words, his eyes raised to heaven. Ethel, almost lifeless, scarcely breathed; but it seemed to her that Ordener, although he exculpated her father, pronounced his name most bitterly. The young man's language terrified and amazed her, although she could not comprehend it. Of all she heard, she grasped nothing but misery.

A sentiment of similar nature seemed to engross the president. He was scarcely able to believe his ears. Nevertheless, he asked the viceroy's son: "If you are indeed the sole author of this revolt, what was your object in instigating it?"

"I cannot tell you."

Ethel shivered when she heard the president reply in a somewhat angry tone: "Had you not an intrigue with Schumacker's daughter?"

But Ordener, though in chains, advanced toward the bench, and exclaimed, in accents of indignation: "Chancellor d'Ahlefeld, content yourself with my life, which I place in your hands; respect a noble and innocent girl. Do not a second time attempt to dishonor her."

Ethel, who felt the blood rise to her face, did not comprehend the meaning of the words, "a second time," upon which her defender laid such emphasis; but by the rage expressed in the president's features, it seemed that he understood them.

"Ordener Guldenlew, do not forget the respect due to the king's justice and the officers of the law. I reprimand you in the name of the court. I now summon you anew to declare your purpose in committing the crime of which you accuse yourself."

"I repeat that I cannot tell you."

"Was it not to deliver Schumacker?" inquired the secretary.

Ordener was silent.

"Do not persist in silence, prisoner," said the president; "it is proved that you have been in communication with Schumacker, and your confession of guilt rather implicates than exonerates the prisoner of Munkholm. You have paid frequent visits to Munkholm, and your motive was surely more than mere curiosity. Let this diamond buckle bear witness."

The president took from the table a diamond buckle.

"Do you recognize it as your property?"

"Yes. By what chance?"

"Well! One of the rebels gave it, before he died, to our private secretary, averring that he received it from you in payment for rowing you across from Throndhjem to Munkholm fortress. Now I ask you, judges, if such a price paid to a common sailor does not prove the importance laid by the prisoner, Ordener Guldenlew, upon his reaching that prison, which is the one where Schumacker was confined?"

"Ah!" exclaimed the prisoner Kennybol, "what your grace says is true; I recognize the buckle. It is the same story which our poor brother Guldon Stayper told me."

"Silence," said the president; "let Ordener Guldenlew answer."

"I will not deny," replied Ordener, "that I desired to see Schumacker. But this buckle has no significance. It is forbidden to enter the fort wearing diamonds. The sailor who rowed me across complained of his poverty during our passage. I flung him this buckle, which I was not allowed to wear."

"Pardon me, your Grace," interrupted the private secretary, "the rule does not include the viceroy's son. You could therefore —"

"I did not wish to give my name."

"Why not?" asked the president.

"I cannot tell you."

"Your relations with Schumacker and his daughter prove that the object of your conspiracy was to set them free."

Schumacker, who had hitherto shown no sign of attention save an occasional scornful shrug of the shoulders, rose: "To set me free! The object of this infernal plot was to compromise and ruin me, as it still is. Do you think that Ordener Guldenlew would confess his share in this crime unless he had been captured among the rebels? Oh, I see that he inherits his father's hatred of me! And as for the relations which you suppose exist between him and myself and my daughter, let him know, that accursed Guldenlew, that my daughter also inherits my loathing for him,— for the whole race of Guldenlews and d'Ahlefelds!"

Ordener sighed deeply, while Ethel in her heart disclaimed her father's assertion; and he fell back upon his bench, quivering with wrath.

"The court will decide for itself," said the president.

Ordener, who, at Schumacker's words, had silently cast down his eyes, seemed to awake: "Oh, hear me, noble judges! You are about to examine your consciences; do not forget that Ordener Guldenlew is alone guilty; Schumacker is innocent. These other unfortunate men were deceived by my agent, Hacket. I did everything else."

Kennybol interrupted him: "His worship says truly, judges, for it was he who undertook to bring Hans of Iceland to us; I only hope that name may not bring me ill luck. I know that it was this young man who ventured to seek him out in Walderhog cave, to persuade him to be our leader. He confided the secret of his undertaking to me in Surb village, at the house of my brother Braal. And for the rest, too, the young gentleman says truly; we were deceived by that confounded Hacket, whence it follows that we do not deserve death."

"Mr. Secretary," said the president, "the hearing is ended. What are your conclusions?"

The secretary rose, bowed several times to the court, passed his finger under the folds of his lace band, without taking his eyes from the president's face. At last he pronounced the following words in a dull, measured voice: "Mr. Presi-

dent, most worthy judges! It is a true bill. Ordener Guldenlew, who has forever tarnished the glory of an illustrious name, has only succeeded in establishing his own guilt without proving the innocence of ex-chancellor Schumacker and his accomplices, Hans of Iceland, Wilfred Kennybol, Jonas, and Norbith. I require the court to declare the six prisoners guilty of the crime of high treason in the first degree."

A vague murmur rose from the crowd. The president was about to dismiss the court, when the bishop asked for a brief hearing.

"Learned judges, it is proper that the prisoners' defence should be heard last. I could wish that they had a better advocate, for I am old and feeble, and have no other strength than that which proceeds from God. I am confounded at the secretary's severe sentence. There is no proof of my client Schumacker's crime. There is no evidence that he has had any direct share in the insurrection; and since my other client, Ordener Guldenlew, confesses that he made unlawful use of Schumacker's name, and moreover that he is the sole author of this damnable sedition, all evidence against Schumacker disappears; you should therefore acquit him. I recommend to your Christian indulgence the other prisoners, who were only led astray like the Good Shepherd's sheep; and even young Ordener Guldenlew, who has at least the merit, very great in the sight of God, of confessing his crime. Reflect, judges, that he is still at the age when a man may err, and even fall; but God does not refuse to support or to raise him up. Ordener Guldenlew bears scarce a fourth the burden of years which weigh down my head. Place in the balance of your judgment his youth and inexperience, and do not so soon deprive him of the life which the Lord has but lately given him."

The old man ceased, and took his place beside Ordener, who smiled; while at the invitation of the president, the judges rose from the bench, and silently crossed the threshold of the dread scene of their deliberations.

While a handful of men were deciding the fate of six fel-

low-beings within that terrible sanctuary, the prisoners remained motionless upon their seat between two files of halberdiers. Schumacker, his head on his breast, seemed absorbed in meditation. The giant stared to the right and left with stupid assurance; Jonas and Kennybol, with clasped hands, prayed in low tones, while their comrade, Norbith, stamped his foot or shook his chains with a convulsive start. Between him and the venerable bishop, who was reading the penitential psalms, sat Ordener, with folded arms and eyes lifted to heaven.

Behind them was the noise of the crowd, which swelled high when the judges left the room. The famous prisoner of Munkholm, the much-dreaded demon of Iceland, and above all the viceroy's son, were the objects of every thought, every speech, and every glance. The uproar, mingled with groans, laughter, and confused cries, rose and fell like a flame flickering in the wind.

Thus passed several hours of anxious expectation, so long that every one was astonished that they could be contained in a single night. From time to time a glance was cast toward the door of the anteroom; but there was nothing to be seen, save the two soldiers pacing to and fro with their glittering partisans before the fatal entrance, like two silent ghosts.

At last the lamps and torches began to burn dim, and the first pale rays of dawn were piercing the narrow windows of the room when the awful door opened. Profound silence instantly, and as if by magic, took the place of all the confusion; and the only sounds heard were the hurried breathing and the vague slight stir of the multitude in suspense.

The judges, proceeding slowly from the anteroom, resumed their places on the bench, the president at their head.

The private secretary, who had seemed absorbed in thought during their absence, bowed and said: "Mr. President, what sentence does the court, from whose decision there is no appeal, pronounce in the king's name? We are ready to hear it with religious respect."

The judge, seated at the president's right hand, rose, holding a roll of parchment: "His Grace, our illustrious president, exhausted by the length of this session, has deigned to commission me, lord mayor of the province of Throndhjem, and the natural president of this worshipful court, to read in his stead the sentence pronounced in the name of the king. I am about to fulfil this honorable but painful duty, requesting the audience to hear the king's impeccable justice in silence."

The lord mayor's voice then assumed a grave and solemn intonation, and every heart beat faster.

"In the name of our revered master and lawful sovereign, King Christian, we, the judges of the Supreme Court of the province of Throndhjem, summoned to decide in the cases of John Schumacker, prisoner of the State; Wilfred Kennybol, native of the Kiölen Mountains; Jonas, royal miner; Norbith, royal miner; Hans of Klipstadur, in Iceland; and Ordener Guldenlew, Baron Thorwick, Knight of the Dannebrog, all accused of high treason and leze-majesty in the first degree (Hans of Iceland being moreover charged with the crimes of murder, arson, and robbery), do find:—

"I. That John Schumacker is not guilty;

"II. That Wilfred Kennybol, Jonas, and Norbith are guilty, but are recommended to mercy, because they were led astray;

"III. That Hans of Iceland is guilty of all the crimes laid to his charge;

"IV. That Ordener Guldenlew is guilty of high treason and leze-majesty in the first degree."

The judge paused an instant as if to take breath. Ordener fixed upon him a look of celestial joy.

"John Schumacker," resumed the judge, "the court acquits you and remands you to prison;

"Kennybol, Jonas, and Norbith, the court commutes the penalty which you have incurred, to imprisonment for life, and a fine of one thousand crowns each;

"Hans of Klipstadur, murderer and incendiary, you will

be taken this night to Munkholm parade-ground, and hanged by the neck until you are dead, dead, dead!

"Ordener Guldenlew, traitor, after having been stripped of your titles in presence of this court, you will be conducted this very night to the same place, with a lighted torch in your hand, and there your head shall be hewn off, your body burned, your ashes strewn to the winds, and your head exposed upon a stake. Let all withdraw. Such is the sentence rendered by the king's justice."

The lord mayor had scarcely ended these fatal words, when a shriek rang through the room. This shriek horrified the spectators even more than did the fearful terms of the death sentence; this shriek for a brief moment turned the calm and radiant face of the condemned Ordener pale.

XLIV

Misfortune made them equals.— CHARLES NODIER.

ALL was over now; Ordener's work was done. He had saved the father of the woman he loved; he had saved her too by preserving her father to protect her. The young man's noble plot to save Schumacker's life had succeeded; nothing else mattered now; it only remained for him to die.

Let those who deem him guilty or foolish judge the generous Ordener now, as he judges himself in his own soul with holy rapture. For it had been his one thought, when he entered the rebel ranks, that if he could not prevent Schumacker from carrying out his guilty purpose, he might at least help him to escape punishment by drawing it upon his own head.

"Alas!" he thought, "Schumacker is undoubtedly guilty; but embittered as he is by misfortune and imprisonment, his crime is excusable. He sighs to be set free; he struggles to acquire his liberty, even by rebellion. Besides, what would

become of my Ethel if her father were taken from her; if she should lose him by the gallows, if fresh disgrace should blast his name, what would become of her, helpless and unprotected, alone in her cell or roaming through a world of foes?" This thought determined him to make the sacrifice, and he joyfully prepared for it. It is a lover's greatest happiness to lay down his life, I do not say for the life, but for a smile or a tear, of the loved object.

He was accordingly captured with the rebels, was dragged before the judges assembled to condemn Schumacker, his generous falsehood was uttered, he was sentenced, he must die a cruel death, suffer shameful torments, leave behind him a stained name; but what cared the noble youth? He had saved his Ethel's father.

He sat chained in a damp dungeon, where light and air never entered save through dark holes; beside him was a supply of food for the remnant of his existence,— a loaf of black bread and a jug of water; an iron collar weighed down his neck; iron fetters were about his hands and feet. Every hour that passed robbed him of a greater portion of his life than a year would bear away from other mortals. He was lost in a delicious dream.

"Perhaps my memory will not die with me, at least in one human heart. Perhaps she will deign to shed a tear in return for the blood I so freely shed for her; perhaps she will sometimes heave a sigh for him who sacrificed his life for her; perhaps in her virgin thoughts the dim image of her friend may sometimes appear. And who knows what lies behind the veil of death? Who knows if our souls, freed from their material prison, may not sometimes return to watch over the souls of those they love, and hold mysterious communion with those sweet companions still prisoned in the flesh, and in secret bring them angelic comfort and heavenly bliss?"

And yet bitter reflections would sometimes mingle with these consoling meditations. The hatred which Schumacker had expressed for him at the very moment of his self-sacri-

fice oppressed him. The agonized shriek which he had heard at the same instant with his death sentence had moved him deeply; for he alone, of all the assembly, recognized that voice and understood that misery. And should he never again see his Ethel? Must his last moments he passed within the self-same walls that contained her, and he be still unable to touch her soft hand once more, once more to hear the gentle voice of her for whom he was about to die?

He had yielded thus to those vague, sad musings which are to the mind what sleep is to the body, when the hoarse creak of rusty bolts struck harshly on his ear, already attuned to the music of the sphere to which he was so soon to take his flight. The heavy iron door grated upon its hinges. The young prisoner rose calmly, almost gladly, for he thought that the executioner had come for him, and he had already cast aside his life like the cloak beneath his feet.

He was mistaken. A slender white figure stood upon the threshold, like a radiant vision. Ordener doubted his own eyes, and wondered if he were not already in heaven. It was she; it was his Ethel!

The girl fell into his fettered embrace; she covered his hands with tears, and dried them with her long black hair. Kissing his chains, she bruised her pure lips upon those infamous irons; she did not speak, but her whole heart seemed ready to burst forth in the first word which might break through her sobs.

He felt the most celestial joy which he had known since his birth. He gently pressed his Ethel to his breast, and the combined powers of earth and hell could not at that moment have loosed the arms which encircled her. The knowledge of his approaching death lent a certain solemnity to his rapture; and he held his Ethel as close as if he had already taken possession of her for all eternity.

He did not ask this angel how she had gained access to him. She was there: could he waste a thought on anything else? Nor was he surprised. He never asked how this pro-

scribed, feeble, lonely girl, in spite of triple doors of iron and triple ranks of soldiers, had contrived to open her own prison and that of her lover; it seemed to him quite simple; he had a perfect appreciation of the power of love.

Why speak with the voice when the soul can speak as readily? Why not allow the body to listen silently to the mysterious language of the spirit? Both were silent, because there are certain emotions which can find expression in silence only.

At last the young girl lifted her head from her lover's throbbing heart. "Ordener," said she, "I am here to save you;" and she uttered these words of hope with a pang.

Ordener smiled, and shook his head.

"To save me, Ethel! You deceive yourself; escape is impossible."

"Alas! I am but too well aware of that. This castle is crowded with soldiers, and every door is guarded by archers and jailers who never sleep." She added with an effort: "But I bring you another means of safety."

"No, no; your hope is vain. Do not delude yourself with idle fancies, Ethel; a few hours hence the axe will cruelly dispel them."

"Oh, do not say so, Ordener! You shall not die. Oh, spare me that dreadful thought! Or rather, no; let me behold it in all its horror, to give me strength to save you and sacrifice myself."

There was a strange expression in the young girl's voice.

Ordener gazed at her tenderly. "Sacrifice yourself! What do you mean?"

She hid her face in her hands, and sobbed almost inarticulately, "Oh, God!"

The struggle was brief; she overcame her emotion; her eyes sparkled, her lips wore a smile. She was as beautiful as an angel ascending from hell to heaven.

"Listen, my own Ordener: your scaffold shall never be reared. If you will but promise to marry Ulrica d'Ahlefeld, you may live."

"Ulrica d'Ahlefeld! That name from your lips, my Ethel!"

"Do not interrupt me," she continued, with the calm of a martyr undergoing the last pang; "I am sent here by Countess d'Ahlefeld. She promises to gain your pardon from the king, if in return you will agree to bestow your hand upon her daughter. I am here to obtain your oath to marry Ulrica and live for her. She chose me as her messenger because she thought that my voice might have some influence over you."

"Ethel," said the condemned man, in icy tones, "farewell! When you leave this cell, bid the hangman hasten his coming."

She rose, stood before him one moment, pale and trembling, then her knees gave way beneath her, and she sank to the stone floor with clasped hands.

"What have I done to him?" she muttered faintly.

Ordener silently fixed his eyes upon the flags.

"My lord," she said, dragging herself to him on her knees, "you do not answer me. Will you not speak to me once more? Then there is nothing left for me but to die."

A tear stood in the young man's eye.

"Ethel, you no longer love me."

"Oh, God!" cried the poor girl, clasping his knees. "No longer love you! You say that I no longer love you, Ordener! Did you really say those words?"

"You no longer love me, for you despise me."

He repented these cruel words as soon as he had uttered them; for Ethel's tone was heart-rending, as she threw her adored arms around his neck, and exclaimed in a voice broken by tears: "Forgive me, my beloved Ordener; forgive me as I forgive you. I despise you! Great heavens! Are you not my pride, my idol, my all? Tell me, was there aught in my words but deep love and ardent adoration? Alas! your stern language wounds me sorely, when I came here to save you, my idolized Ordener, by sacrificing my whole life for yours."

"Well," replied the young man, softened by her tears, and kissing them away, "was it not a want of esteem to suppose that I would buy my life by forsaking you, by basely renouncing my oaths, by sacrificing my love?" He added, fixing his eye on Ethel: "My love, for which I am about to shed my blood!"

Ethel uttered a deep groan as she answered: "Hear me, Ordener, before you judge me so rashly. Perhaps I have more strength than usually falls to the lot of a weak woman. From our lofty prison window I saw them build your scaffold on the parade. Ordener, you do not know what fearful agony it is to see the slow preparations for the death of one whose life is an indissoluble part of your own! Countess d'Ahlefeld, at whose side I sat when I heard the judge pronounce your death sentence, came to the cell to which I had returned with my father. She asked me if I would save you; she proposed this hateful means. Ordener, my poor happiness must perish; I must give you up, renounce you forever; yield to another my Ordener, poor lonely Ethel's only joy, or deliver you to the executioner. They bid me choose between my own misery and your death. I cannot hesitate."

He kissed this angel's hand with respectful worship.

"Neither do I hesitate, Ethel. You would not offer me life with Ulrica d'Ahlefeld's hand if you knew why I die."

"What? What secret mystery —"

"Let me keep this one secret from you, my beloved Ethel. I must die without letting you know whether you owe me gratitude or hatred for my death."

"You must die! Must you then die? Oh, God! it is but too true, and the scaffold stands ready even now; and no human power can save my Ordener, whom they will slay! Tell me,— cast one look upon your slave, your wife, and tell me, promise me, beloved Ordener, that you will listen to me without anger. Are you very sure — answer me as you would answer to God — that you could not be happy with that woman, that Ulrica d'Ahlefeld? Are you very sure,

Ordener? Perhaps she is, she surely is, handsome, amiable, virtuous. She is far superior to her for whom you perish. Do not turn away your head, dear friend, dear Ordener. You are so noble and so young to mount the scaffold. Think! you might live with her in some gay city where you would lose all memory of this fatal dungeon; your days would flow by peacefully, without a thought of me. I consent,— you may drive me from your heart, erase my image from your thoughts, Ordener. Only live! Leave me here alone; let me be the one to die. And believe me, when I know that you are in the arms of another, you need not fear for me; I shall not suffer long."

She paused; her voice was drowned in tears. Still her grief-stricken countenance was radiant with her longing to win the ill-omened victory which must be her death.

Ordener said: "No more of this, Ethel. Let no name but yours and mine pass our lips at such a moment."

"Alas! alas!" she replied, "then you persist in dying?"

"I must. I shall go to the scaffold gladly for your sake; I should go to the altar with any other woman with horror and aversion. Say no more; you wound and distress me."

She wept, and murmured: "He will die, oh, God, a death of infamy!"

The condemned man answered with a smile: "Believe me, Ethel, there is less dishonor in my death than in such a life as you propose."

At this instant his eye, glancing away from his weeping Ethel, observed an old man in clerical dress standing in the shadow under the low, arched door. "What do you want?" said he, hastily.

"My lord, I came with the Countess d'Ahlefeld's messenger. You did not see me, and I waited silently until you should notice me."

In fact, Ordener had eyes for Ethel only; and she, at the sight of Ordener, had forgotten her companion.

"I am," continued the old man, "the minister whose duty it is —"

"I understand," said the young man; "I am ready."

The minister advanced toward him.

"God is also ready to receive you, my son."

"Sir," said Ordener, "your face is not unknown to me; I must have seen you elsewhere."

The minister bowed. "I too recognize you, my son; we met in Vygla tower. We both proved upon that occasion the fallibility of human words. You promised me the pardon of twelve unhappy prisoners, and I put no faith in your promise, being unable to guess that you were the viceroy's son; and you, my lord, who reckoned upon your power and your rank when you made me that promise —"

Ordener finished the thought which Athanasius Munder dared not put into words.

"Cannot now obtain pardon even for myself. You are right, sir. I had too little reverence for the future; it has punished me by showing me that its power is greater than mine."

The minister bent his head. "God is great!" said he.

Then he raised his kind eyes to Ordener, adding, "God is good!"

Ordener, who seemed preoccupied, exclaimed, after a brief pause: "Listen, sir; I will keep the promise which I made you in Vygla tower. When I am dead, go to Bergen, seek out my father, the viceroy of Norway, and tell him that the last favor which his son asks of him is to pardon your twelve protégés. He will grant it, I am sure."

A tear of emotion moistened the wrinkled cheek of Athanasius.

"My son, your soul must be filled with noble thoughts, if in the self-same hour you can reject your own pardon and generously implore that of others. For I heard your refusal; and although I blame such dangerous and inordinate affection, I was deeply touched by it. Now I ask myself,— *unde scelus?* — how could a man who approaches so near to the model of true justice soil his conscience with the crime for which you are condemned?"

"Father, I did not tell my secret to this angel; I cannot reveal it to you. But believe that I am not condemned for any crime of mine."

"What? Explain yourself, my son!"

"Do not urge me," firmly answered the young man. "Let me take my secret with me to the grave."

"This man cannot be guilty," muttered the minister.

Then drawing from his breast a black crucifix, he placed it on a sort of altar rudely shaped from a granite slab resting against the damp prison wall. Beside the crucifix he laid a small lighted lamp which he had brought with him, and an open Bible. "My son, meditate and pray; I will return a few hours hence. Come," he added, turning to Ethel, who during this conversation had preserved a solemn silence, "we must leave the prisoner. Our time has passed."

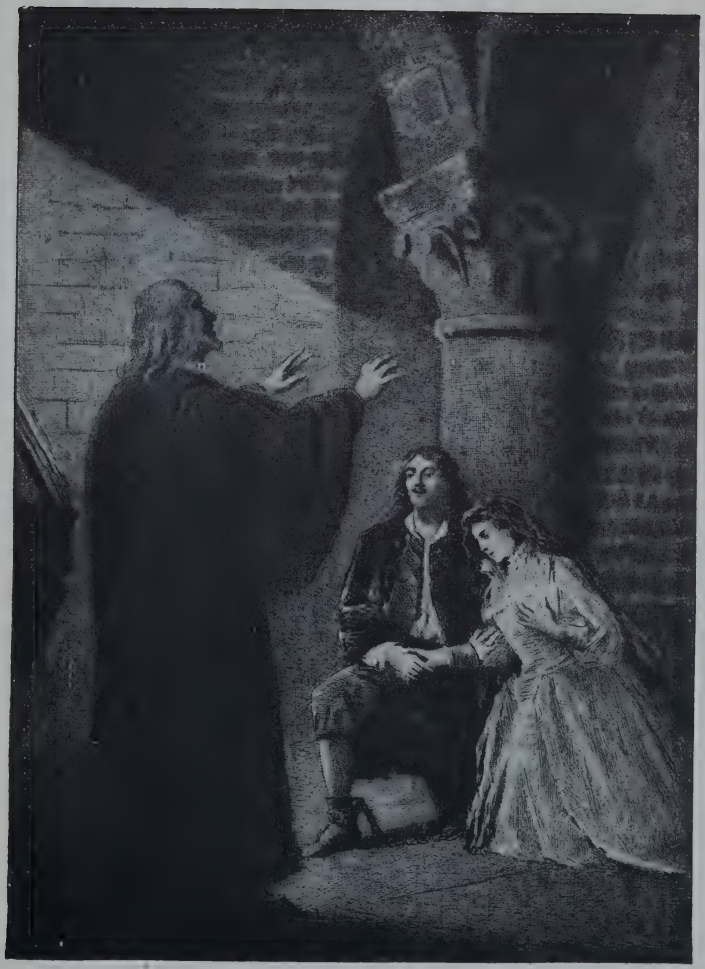
She rose, calm and radiant; a divine spark flashed from her eyes as she said: "Sir, I cannot go yet; you must first unite Ethel Schumacker to her husband, Ordener Guldenlew."

She looked at Ordener.

"If you were still free, happy, and powerful, my Ordener, I should weep, and I should shrink from linking my fatal destiny with yours. But now that you need no longer dread the contagion of my misfortune; that you, like me, are a captive, disgraced and oppressed; now that you are about to die, I come to you, hoping that you will at least deign, Ordener, my lord and husband, to allow her who could never have shared your life, to be your companion in death; for you love me too much, do you not, to doubt for an instant that I shall die with you?"

The prisoner fell at her feet, and kissed the hem of her gown.

"You, old man," she resumed, "must take the place of family and parents. This cell shall be our temple, this stone our altar. Here is my ring; we kneel before God and before you. Bless us, and pronounce the sacred words which shall unite Ethel Schumacker and Ordener Guldenlew, her lord."



"The sweet and solemn ceremony was performed. With the final blessing of the priest, they rose a wedded pair."

Hans of Iceland. *Page* 343.

And they knelt together before the priest, who regarded them with mingled astonishment and pity.

"How, my children! What would you do?"

"Father," said the girl, "time presses. God and death wait for us."

In this life we sometimes meet with irresistible powers, supreme wills to which we yield instantly as if they were more than human. The priest raised his eyes, sighing: "May the Lord forgive me if I do wrong! You love each other; you have but little time to love on earth. I do not think I shall fail in my allegiance to God if I legalize your love."

The sweet and solemn ceremony was performed. With the final blessing of the priest, they rose a wedded pair.

The prisoner's face beamed with painful joy; he seemed for the first time conscious of the bitterness of death, now that he realized the sweetness of life. The features of his companion were sublime in their expression of grandeur and simplicity; she still felt the modesty of a maiden, and already exulted as a young wife.

"Hear me, Ordener," said she; "is it not fortunate that we must die, since we could never have been united in life? Do you know, love, what I will do? I will stand at the window of my cell, where I can see you mount the scaffold, so that our spirits may wing their flight to heaven together. If I should die before the axe falls, I will wait for you; for we are husband and wife, my adored Ordener, and this night our coffin shall be our bridal bed."

He pressed her to his throbbing heart, and could only utter these words, which for him summed up all human happiness: "Ethel, you are mine!"

"My children," said the chaplain, in a broken voice, "say farewell; it is time."

"Alas!" cried Ethel.

All her angelic strength returned, and she knelt before the prisoner: "Farewell, my beloved Ordener! My lord, give me your blessing."

The prisoner yielded to this touching request, then turned to take leave of the venerable Athanasius Munder. The old man was kneeling at his feet.

"What do you wish, father?" he asked in surprise.

The old man gazed at him with sweet humility: "Your blessing, my son."

"May Heaven bless you, and grant you all the happiness which your prayers call down upon your brother men!" replied Ordener, in touched and solemn tones.

Soon the sepulchral arches heard their last kisses and their last farewells; soon the rude bolts creaked noisily into place, and the iron door separated the youthful pair who were to die, only to meet again in eternity.

XLV

I will give two thousand crowns to any man who shall deliver over to me Louis Perez, dead or alive.— CALDERON: *Louis Perez of Galicia.*

"BARON VŒTHAUN, colonel of the Munkholm musketeers, which of the men who fought under your command at Black Pillar Pass took Hans of Iceland prisoner? Name him to the court, that he may receive the thousand crowns reward offered for the capture."

The president of the court thus addressed the colonel of musketeers. The court was in session; for according to old Norwegian custom, a court from whose sentence there is no appeal cannot adjourn until the sentence has been carried out. Before the judges stood the giant, who had just been led in again, with the rope round his neck from which he was soon to hang.

The colonel, seated at the table with the private secretary, rose and bowed to the court and to the bishop, who had reascended his throne.

"My lord judges, the soldier who captured Hans of Ice-

land is present. His name is Toric-Belfast, second musketeer of my regiment."

"Let him stand forth," replied the president, "and receive the promised reward."

A young soldier in the Munkholm uniform stepped forward.

"You are Toric-Belfast?" asked the president.

"Yes, your worship."

"It was you who took Hans of Iceland prisoner?"

"Yes, by the aid of Saint Beelzebub, I did, please your worship."

A heavy bag of money was placed before the bench.

"Do you recognize this man as the famous Hans of Iceland?" added the president, pointing to the fettered giant.

"I am better acquainted with my Kitty's pretty face than with that of Hans of Iceland; but I declare, by the halo of Saint Belphegor, that if Hans of Iceland be anywhere, it is in the shape of that big devil."

"Advance, Toric-Belfast," said the president. "Here are the thousand crowns offered by the lord mayor."

The soldier hurried toward the bench, when a voice rose from the crowd: "Munkholm musketeer, you never captured Hans of Iceland."

"By all the blessed devils!" cried the soldier, turning around, "I own nothing but my pipe and the moment of time in which I speak; but still I promise to give ten thousand gold crowns to the man who says that, if he can prove his words."

And folding his arms, he cast an assured glance over the audience: "Well! let the man who spoke, show himself."

"It is I!" said a small man, elbowing his way through the crowd.

The new-comer was wrapped in sealskin, like a Greenlander, his outlandish garb hanging stiffly about him. His beard was black; and thick hair of the same color, falling over his red eyebrows, concealed a hideous face. Neither his hands nor his arms were visible.

"Oh, it is you, is it?" said the soldier, with a loud laugh. "And who, then, do you say it was, my fine gentleman, that had the honor of capturing that infernal giant?"

The little man shook his head, and said with a malicious smile: "It was I."

At this instant Baron Vœthaün fancied that he recognized the mysterious being who had warned him at Skongen of the arrival of the rebels; Chancellor d'Ahlefeld thought he recognized his host at Arbar ruin; and the private secretary, a certain peasant from Oëlmœ, who wore a similar dress, and who had pointed out the lair of Hans of Iceland. But the three being separated, they could not impart to one another this fleeting impression, which the differences of feature and costume, afterward observed, must have soon dissipated.

"Indeed! it was you, was it?" ironically observed the soldier. "If it were not for your Greenland seal's costume, by the look which you cast at me, I should be tempted to take you for another ridiculous dwarf, who tried to pick a quarrel with me at the Spladgest, a fortnight or so ago. It was the very day that they brought in the body of Gill Stadt, the miner."

"Gill Stadt!" broke in the little man, with a shudder.

"Yes, Gill Stadt!" repeated the soldier, with an air of indifference,—"the rejected lover of a girl who was sweetheart to a comrade of mine, and for whose sake he died, like the fool that he was."

The little man said in hollow tones: "Was there not also the body of an officer of your regiment at the Spladgest?"

"Exactly; I shall remember that day as long as I live. I forgot that it was the hour for the tattoo, and I was arrested when I got back to the fort. That officer was Captain Dispolsen."

At this name the private secretary rose.

"These two fellows abuse the patience of the court. We beg the president to cut short this idle chatter."

"By my Kitty's good name! I ask nothing better," said Toric-Belfast, "provided your worships will give me the

thousand crowns offered for the head of Hans, for it was I who took him prisoner."

"You lie!" cried the little man.

The soldier clapped his hand to his sword: "It is very lucky for you, you rascal, that we are in the presence of the court, where a soldier, even a Munkholm musketeer, must never resort to force."

"The reward," coldly observed the little man, "belongs to me; for if it were not for me, you would never have won Hans of Iceland's head."

The indignant soldier swore that it was he who captured Hans of Iceland, when, wounded on the field of battle, he was just beginning to revive.

"Well," said his opponent, "you may have captured him, but it was I who struck him down. If it had not been for me, you could never have taken him prisoner; therefore the thousand crowns are mine."

"It is false," replied the soldier. "It was not you who struck him down; it was an evil spirit, clad in the skins of wild beasts."

"It was I!"

"No, no!"

The president ordered both parties to be silent; then, again asking Colonel Vœthaün whether it was really Toric-Belfast who brought Hans of Iceland into camp a prisoner, at his assent he declared that the prize belonged to the soldier.

The small man gnashed his teeth, and the musketeer greedily stretched out his hands for the sack.

"One moment!" cried the little man. "Mr. President, that money, according to the lord mayor's proclamation, was to be given to him who took Hans of Iceland."

"Well?" said the judge.

The little man turned to the giant: "That man is not Hans of Iceland."

A murmur of surprise ran through the room. The president and private secretary moved uneasily in their chairs.

"No!" emphatically reiterated the small man, "the money does not belong to the cursed musketeer of Munkholm, for that man is not Hans of Iceland."

"Halberdiers," said the president, "remove this madman, he has lost his senses."

The bishop interposed: "Will you allow me, most worthy President, to remark that you may, by refusing to hear this man, destroy the prisoner's last chance? I demand that he be confronted with the stranger."

"Reverend Bishop, the court will grant your request," replied the president; and addressing the giant: "You have declared yourself to be Hans of Iceland; do you persist in that statement?"

The prisoner answered: "I do; I am Hans of Iceland."

"You hear, Bishop?"

The little man shouted in the same breath with the president: "You lie, mountaineer of Kiölen! you lie! Do not persist in bearing a name which must crush you; remember that it has been fatal to you already."

"I am Hans from Klipstadur, in Iceland," repeated the giant, his eye riveted on the private secretary.

The small man approached the Munkholm soldier, who, like the rest of the audience, had watched this scene with eager curiosity.

"Mountaineer of Kiölen," he cried, "they say that Hans of Iceland drinks human blood. If you be he, drink. Here it is."

And scarcely were the words out of his mouth, when, tossing his sealskin mantle over his shoulder, he plunged a dagger into the soldier's heart, and flung his dead body at the giant's feet.

A cry of fright and horror followed; the soldiers guarding the giant started back. The small man, swift as lightning, rushed upon the defenceless mountaineer, and with another blow of his dagger, laid him upon the first corpse. Then flinging off his cloak, his false hair, and black beard, he revealed his wiry limbs, hideously attired in the skins of

wild beasts, and a face which inspired the beholders with even greater horror than did the bloody dagger which he brandised aloft, reeking with a double murder.

"Ha! judges, where is Hans of Iceland now?"

"Guards, seize that monster!" cried the startled judge.

Hans hurled his dagger into the centre of the room.

"It is useless to me if there are no more Munkholm soldiers here."

With these words, he yielded unresistingly to the halberdiers and bowmen who surrounded him, prepared to lay siege to him, as to a city. They chained the monster to the prisoner's bench; and a litter bore away his victims, one of whom, the mountaineer, still breathed.

It is impossible to describe the various emotions of terror, astonishment, and indignation which, during this fearful scene, agitated the people, the guards, and the judges. When the brigand had taken his place, calm and unmoved, upon the fatal bench, a feeling of curiosity overcame every other impression, and breathless attention restored quiet.

The venerable bishop rose: "My lord judges —"

The bandit interrupted him: "Bishop of Throndhjem, I am Hans of Iceland; do not take the trouble to plead for me."

The private secretary rose: "Noble President —"

The monster cut him short: "Private Secretary, I am Hans of Iceland; do not take the pains to accuse me."

Then, his feet in a pool of blood, he ran his bold, fierce eye over the court, the bowman, and the crowd; and it seemed as if each of them trembled with fear at the glance of that one man, unarmed, chained, and alone.

"Listen, judges; expect no long speeches from me. I am the demon of Klipstadur. My mother was old Iceland, the land of volcanoes. Once that land was but one huge mountain; it was crushed by the hand of a giant, who fell from heaven, and rested on its highest peak. I need not speak of myself. I am a descendant of Ingulf the Destroyer, and I bear his spirit within me. I have committed more murders

and kindled more fires than all of you put together ever uttered unjust sentences in your lives. I have secrets in common with Chancellor d'Ahlefeld. I could drink every drop of blood that flows in your veins with delight. It is my nature to hate mankind, my mission to harm them. Colonel of the Munkholm musketeers, it was I who warned you of the march of the miners through Black Pillar Pass, sure that you would kill numbers of men in those gorges; it was I who destroyed a whole battalion of your regiment by hurling granite bowlders upon their heads. I did it to avenge my son. Now, judges, my son is dead; I came here in search of death. The soul of Ingulf oppresses me, because I must bear it alone, and can never transmit it to an heir. I am tired of life, since it can no longer be an example and a lesson to a successor. I have drunk enough blood; my thirst is quenched. Now, here I am; you may drink mine."

He was silent, and every voice repeated his awful words.

The bishop said: "My son, what was your object in committing so many crimes?"

The brigand laughed: "I' faith, I swear, reverend Bishop, it was not like your brother, the bishop of Borglum, with a view to enrich myself.[1] There was something in me which drove me to it."

"God does not always dwell in his ministers," meekly replied the saintly old man. "You would insult me, but I only wish I could defend you."

"Your reverence wastes his breath. Go ask your other brother, the bishop of Scalholt, in Iceland, to defend me. By Ingulf! it is a strange thing that two bishops should protect me,— one in my cradle, the other at my tomb. Bishop, you are an old fool."

"My son, do you believe in God?"

"Why not? There must be a God for us to blaspheme."

1 Certain chroniclers assert that in 1525 a bishop of Borglum made himself notorious by his depredations. He is said to have kept pirates in his pay, who infested the coast of Norway.

"Cease, unhappy man! You are about to die, and you will not kiss the feet of Christ —"

Hans of Iceland shrugged his shoulders.

"If I did so, it would be after the fashion of the constable of Roll, who pulled the king over as he kissed his foot."

The bishop seated himself, deeply moved.

"Come, judges," continued Hans of Iceland, "why this delay? If I were in your place and you in mine, I would not keep you waiting so long for your death sentence."

The court withdrew. After a brief deliberation they returned, and the president read aloud the sentence, which declared that Hans of Iceland was to be "hung by the neck until he was dead, dead, dead."

"That's good," said the brigand. "Chancellor d'Ahlefeld, I know enough about you to obtain a like sentence for you. But live, since you do naught but injure men. Oh, I am sure now that I shall not go to Nistheim!" [1]

The private secretary ordered the guards who led him away to place him in the Lion of Schleswig tower, until a dungeon could be prepared for him in the quarters of the Munkholm regiment, where he might await his execution.

"In the quarters of the Munkholm musketeers!" repeated the monster, with a growl of pleasure.

XLVI

However, the corpse of Ponce de Leon, which had remained beside the fountain, having been disfigured by the sun, the Moors of Alpuxares took possession of it and bore it to Grenada.— E. H.: *The Captive of Ochali.*

BEFORE dawn of the day so many of whose events we have already traced, at the very hour when Ordener's sentence was pronounced at Munkholm, the new keeper of the Throndhjem Spladgest, Benignus Spiagudry's former

[1] According to popular superstition, Nistheim was the hell reserved for those who died of disease or old age.

assistant and present successor, Oglypiglap, was abruptly aroused from his mattress by a violent series of raps, which fairly shook the building. He rose reluctantly, took his copper lamp, whose dim light dazzled his drowsy eyes, and went, swearing at the dampness of the dead-house, to open to those who waked him so early from his sleep.

They were fishers from Sparbo, who carried upon a litter, strewed with reeds, rushes, and seaweed, a corpse which they had found in the waters of the lake.

They laid down their burden within the gloomy walls, and Oglypiglap gave them a receipt for it, so that they might claim their fee.

Left alone in the Spladgest, he began to undress the corpse, which was remarkable for its length and leanness. The first thing which caught his eye as he raised the cloth which covered it was a vast periwig.

"Why, really," said he, "this outlandish wig has passed through my hands before; it belonged to that young French dandy. . . . And," he added, continuing his investigations, "here are the high boots of poor postilion Cramner, who was killed by his horses, and — What the devil does this mean? — the full black suit of Professor Syngramtax, that learned old fogy, who drowned himself not long ago! Who can this new-comer be that comes here clad in the cast-off apparel of all my ancient acquaintance?"

He examined the face of the dead by the light of his lamp, but in vain; the features, already decomposed, had lost their original shape and color. He felt in the pockets, and drew out some scraps of parchment soaked with water and stained with mud; he wiped them carefully on his leather apron, and succeeded in deciphering on one of them these disconnected and half-effaced phrases: "Rudbeck, Saxon the grammarian. Arngrimmsson, bishop of Holum.— There are but two counties in Norway, Larvig and Jarlsberg, and but one barony. — Silver mines exist only at Kongsberg; loadstone and asbestos, at Sund-Moer; amethyst, at Guldbrandsdal; chalcedony, agate, and jasper, at the Färöe Islands.— At Nou-

kahiva, in time of famine, men eat their wives and children. — Thormodr Torfusson; Isleif, bishop of Scalholt, first historian of Iceland.— Mercury played at chess with the Moon, and won the seventy-second part of a day.— Maëlstrom, whirlpool.— *Hirundo, hirudo.*— Cicero, chick pea; glory.— The learned Frode.— Odin consulted the head of Mimer, the wise.—(Mahomet and his dove, Sertorius and his hind.)— The more the soil — the less gypsum it contains —"

"I can scarcely believe my eyes!" he cried, dropping the parchment; "it is the writing of my old master, Benignus Spiagudry!"

Then, examining the corpse afresh, he recognized the long lean hands, the scanty hair, and the whole build of the unfortunate man.

"They were not so much out of the way, after all," thought he, shaking his head, "who charged him with sacrilege and necromancy. The Devil carried him off to drown him in Lake Sparbo. What poor fools we mortals be! Who would ever have thought that Dr. Spiagudry, after taking so many people to board in his hostelry of the dead, would come here at last from afar to be cared for himself!"

The little Lapp philosopher lifted the body, to remove it to one of his six granite beds, when he found that something heavy was fastened about the unhappy Spiagudry's neck by a leather cord.

"Probably the stone with which the Devil pitched him into the lake," he muttered.

He was mistaken; it was a small iron box, upon which, on examining it closely, after wiping it carefully, he discovered a large shield-shaped padlock.

"Of course there is some deviltry in this box," said he; "the man was a sacrilegious sorcerer. I will hand it over to the bishop; it may contain an evil spirit."

Then, taking it from the corpse, which he placed in the inner room, he hurried away to the bishop's palace, muttering a prayer as he went, as a charm against the dreadful box under his arm.

XLVII

Is it a man or an infernal spirit that speaks thus? What mischievous spirit torments thee thus? Show me the relentless foe who inhabits thy heart.— MATURIN.

HANS of Iceland and Schumacker were in the same cell in the Schleswig tower. The acquitted ex-chancellor paced slowly to and fro, his eyes heavy with bitter tears; the condemned brigand laughed at his chains, though surrounded by guards.

The two prisoners studied each other long and silently; it seemed as if both felt themselves and mutually recognized each other as enemies of mankind.

"Who are you?" at length asked the ex-chancellor.

"I will tell you my name," replied the bandit, "to make you shun me. I am Hans of Iceland."

Schumacker advanced toward him.

"Take my hand," said he.

"Do you wish me to devour it?"

"Hans of Iceland," rejoined Schumacker, "I like you because you hate mankind."

"And for that reason I hate you."

"Hark ye, I hate men, as you do, because they have returned me evil for good."

"You do not hate them as I do; I hate them because they have returned me good for evil."

Schumacker shuddered at the monster's expression. In vain he conquered his natural disposition; he could not sympathize with this fiend.

"Yes," he exclaimed, "I abhor men because they are false, ungrateful, cruel. I owe to them all the misery of my life."

"So much the better! I owe them all the pleasure of mine."

"What pleasure?"

"The pleasure of feeling their quivering flesh throb beneath my teeth, their hot blood moisten my parched throat; the rapture of crushing living beings against sharp rocks, and hearing the shriek of my victims mingle with the sound of their breaking limbs. These are the pleasures which I owe to men."

Schumacker shrank in horror from the monster whom he had approached with something like pride in his resemblance to him. Pierced with shame, he hid his wrinkled face in his hands; for his eyes were full of tears of anger, not against mankind but against himself. His great and noble heart began to revolt at the hatred he had so long cherished, when he saw it reflected in Hans of Iceland's heart as in a fearful mirror.

"Well," said the monster, with a sneer,—"well, enemy of man, dare you boast your likeness to me?"

The old man shuddered. "Oh, God! Rather than hate mankind as you do, let me love them."

Guards came to remove the monster to a more secure cell. Schumacker was left alone in his dungeon to dream; but he was no longer the enemy of mankind.

XLVIII

Keep me, O Lord, from the hands of the wicked;
Preserve me from the violent man;
Who have purposed to thrust aside my step.
The proud have hid a snare for me, and cords;
They have spread a net by the wayside;
They have set gins for me.

Psalms cxl. 4.

THE fatal hour had come; the sun showed but half his disk above the horizon. The guards were doubled throughout Munkholm castle; before each door paced fierce silent sentinels. The noises of the town seemed louder and

more confused than usual as they ascended to the dark towers of the fortress, itself a prey to strange excitement. The mournful sound of muffled drums was heard in every court-yard; now and again cannon growled; the heavy bell in the donjon tolled slowly, with sullen, measured strokes; and from every direction boats loaded with people hastened toward the fearful rock.

A scaffold hung with black around which an impatient mob swarmed in ever-increasing numbers, rose from the castle parade-ground in the centre of a hollow square of troops. Upon the scaffold a man clad in red serge walked up and down, now leaning upon the axe in his hand, and now fingering a billet and block upon the funeral platform. Close at hand a stake was prepared, before which several pitch torches burned. Between the scaffold and the stake was planted a post, from which hung the inscription: "ORDENER GÜLDENLEW, TRAITOR." A black flag floated from the top of the Schleswig tower.

At this moment Ordener appeared before the judges, still assembled in the court-room. The bishop alone was absent; his office as counsel for the defence had ended.

The son of the viceroy was dressed in black, and wore upon his neck the collar of the Danneborg. His face was pale but proud. He was alone; for he had been led forth to torture before Chaplain Athanasius Munder returned to his cell.

Ordener's sacrifice was already inwardly accomplished. And yet Ethel's husband still clung to life, and might perhaps have chosen another night than that of the tomb for his wedding night. He had prayed and dreamed many dreams in his dreary cell. Now he was beyond all prayers and all dreams. He was strong in the strength imparted by religion and by love.

The crowd, more deeply moved than the prisoner, eagerly gazed at him. His illustrious rank, his horrible fate, awakened universal envy and pity. Every spectator watched his punishment, without comprehending his crime. In every

human heart lurks a strange feeling which urges its owner to behold the tortures of others as well as their pleasures. Men seek with awful avidity to read destruction upon the distorted features of one who is about to die, as if some revelation from heaven or from hell must appear at that awful moment in the poor wretch's eyes; as if they would learn what sort of shadow is cast by the death angel's wing as he hovers over a human head; as if they would search and know what is left to a man when hope is gone. That being, full of health and strength, moving, breathing, living, and which in another instant must cease to move, breathe, and live, surrounded by beings like himself, whom he never harmed, all of whom pity him, and none of whom can help him; that wretched being, dying, though not dead bending alike beneath an earthly power and an invisible might; this life, which society could not give, but which it takes with all the pomp and ceremony of legal murder,— profoundly stir the popular imagination. Condemned, as all of us are, to death, with an indefinite reprieve, the unfortunate man who knows the exact hour when his reprieve expires is an object of strange and painful curiosity.

The reader may remember that before he mounted the scaffold, Ordener was to be taken before the court, there to be stripped of his titles and honors. Hardly had the stir excited in the assembly by his arrival given place to quiet, when the president ordered the book of heraldry of both kingdoms, and the statutes of the order of the Dannebrog, to be brought.

Then directing the prisoner to kneel upon one knee, he commanded the spectators to pay respectful heed, opened the book of the knights of the Dannebrog, and began to read in a loud, stern voice: "We, Christian, by the grace and mercy of Almighty God, king of Denmark and Norway, of Goths and Vandals, Duke of Schleswig, Holstein, Stormaria, and Dytmarsen, Count of Oldenburg and Delmenhurst, do declare:—

"That having re-established, at the suggestion of the

lord chancellor, Count Griffenfeld [the president passed over this name so rapidly that it was scarcely audible], the royal order of the Dannebrog, founded by our illustrious ancestor, Saint Waldemar,

"Whereas we hold that inasmuch as the said venerable order was created in memory of the flag Dannebrog sent down from heaven to our blessed kingdom,

"It would belie the divine origin of the order should any knight forfeit his honor, or break the holy laws of Church and State with impunity,

"We therefore decree, kneeling before God, that whosoever of the knights of the order shall deliver his soul to the demon by any felony or treason, after a public reprimand from the court, shall be forever degraded from his rank as a knight of this our royal order of the Dannebrog."

The president closed the book. "Ordener Guldenlew, Baron Thorwick, Knight of the Dannebrog, you have been found guilty of high treason, for which crime your head shall be cut off, your body burned, and your ashes flung to the winds. Ordener Guldenlew, traitor, you have shown yourself unworthy to hold rank with the knights of the Dannebrog. I request you to humble yourself, for I am about to degrade you publicly in the name of the king."

The president stretched his hand over the book of the order and prepared to pronounce the fatal formula against Ordener, who remained calm and motionless, when a side door opened to the right of the bench.

An officer of the Church entered and announced his reverence, the bishop of Throndhjem. He entered hurriedly, accompanied by another ecclesiastic, on whose arm he leaned.

"Stop, Mr. President!" he exclaimed with a strength of which a man of his age seemed hardly capable. "Stop! Heaven be praised! I am in time."

The audience listened with renewed interest, foreseeing some fresh development. The president turned angrily to the bishop: "Allow me to inform your reverence that your

presence here is wholly unnecessary. The court is about to degrade from his rank the prisoner, who will suffer the penalty of his crime directly."

"Forbear," said the bishop, "to lay hands on one who is pure in the sight of God. The prisoner is innocent."

The cry of astonishment which burst from the spectators was only matched by the cry of terror uttered by the president and private secretary.

"Yes, tremble, judges!" resumed the bishop, before the president could recover his usual presence of mind; "tremble! for you are about to shed innocent blood."

As the president's agitation died, away, Ordener arose in consternation. The noble youth feared lest his generous ruse had been discovered, and proofs of Schumacker's guilt had been found.

"Bishop," said the president, "in this affair crime seems to evade us, being transferred from one to another. Do not trust to any mere appearance. If Ordener Guldenlew be innocent, who, then, is guilty?"

"Your grace shall know," replied the bishop. Then showing the court an iron casket which a servant had brought in behind him: "Noble lords, you have judged in darkness; within this casket is the miraculous light which shall dissipate that darkness."

The president, private secretary, and Ordener, all seemed amazed at the sight of the mysterious casket.

The bishop added: "Noble judges, hear me. To-day, as I returned to my palace, to rest from the fatigues of the night and to pray for the prisoners, I received this sealed iron box. The keeper of the Spladgest, I was told, brought it to the palace this morning to be given to me, declaring that it undoubtedly contained some Satanic charm, as he had found it on the body of the sacrilegious Benignus Spiagudry, which had just been fished out of Lake Sparbo."

Ordener listened more eagerly than ever. All the spectators were as still as death. The president and private secretary hung their heads guiltily. They seemed to have lost

all their cunning and audacity. There is a moment in the life of every sinner when his power vanishes.

"After blessing this casket," continued the bishop, "we broke the seal, which, as you can still see, bears the ancient and now extinct arms of Griffenfeld. We did indeed find a devilish secret within. You shall judge for yourselves, venerable sirs. Lend me your most earnest attention, for human blood is at stake, and the Lord will hold you accountable for every drop that you may shed."

Then opening the terrible casket, he drew forth a slip of parchment, upon which was written the following testimony: —

I, Blaxtham Cumbysulsum, doctor, being about to die, do declare that of my own free will and pleasure I have placed in the hands of Captain Dispolsen, the agent, at Copenhagen, of the former Count Griffenfeld, the enclosed document, drawn up wholly by the hand of Turiaf Musdœmon, servant of the chancellor, Count d'Ahlefeld, to the end that the said captain may make such use of it as shall seem to him best; and I pray God to pardon my crimes.

Given under my hand and seal at Copenhagen, this eleventh day of January, 1699.

CUMBYSULSUM.

The private secretary shook like a leaf. He tried to speak, but could not. The bishop handed the parchment to the pale and agitated president.

"What do I see?" exclaimed the latter, as he unfolded the parchment. "A note to the noble Count d'Ahlefeld, upon the means of legally ridding himself of Schumacker! I — I swear, reverend Bishop —"

The paper dropped from his trembling fingers.

"Read it, read it, sir," said the bishop. "I doubt not that your unworthy servant has abused your name as he has that of the unfortunate Schumacker. Only see the result of your uncharitable aversion to your fallen predecessor. One of your followers has plotted his ruin in your name, doubtless hoping to make a merit of it to your Grace."

These words revived the president, as showing him that the suspicions of the bishop, who was acquainted with the entire

contents of the casket, had not fallen upon him. Ordener also breathed more freely. He began to see that the innocence of Ethel's father might be made manifest at the same time with his own. He felt a deep surprise at the singular fate which had led him to pursue a fearful brigand to recover this casket, which his old guide, Benignus Spiagudry, bore about him all the time; that it was actually following him while he was seeking for it. He also reflected on the solemn lesson of the events which, after ruining him by means of this same fatal casket, now proved the instrument of his salvation.

The president, recovering himself, read with much show of indignation, in which the entire audience shared, a lengthy memorandum, in which Musdœmon set forth all the details of the abominable scheme which we have seen him execute in the course of this story. Several times the private secretary attempted to rise and defend himself, but each time he was frowned down. At last the odious reading came to an end amid a murmur of universal horror.

"Halberdiers, seize that man!" said the president, pointing to the private secretary.

The wretch, speechless and almost lifeless, stepped from his place, and was cast into the criminal dock, followed by the hoots of the populace.

"Judges," said the bishop, "shudder and rejoice. The truth which has just been brought home to your consciences, will now be even more strongly confirmed by the testimony of our honored brother, Athanasius Munder, chaplain to the prisons of this royal town."

It was indeed Athanasius Munder who accompanied the bishop. He bowed to his superior in the Church and to the court, then at a sign from the president, proceeded as follows: "What I am about to state is the truth. May Heaven punish me if I utter a word with any other object than to do my duty! From what I saw this morning in the cell of the viceroy's son, I was led to think that the young man was not guilty, although your lordships had condemned him upon

his own confession. Now, I was called, a few hours since, to give the last spiritual consolations to the unfortunate mountaineer so cruelly murdered before your very eyes, and whom you condemned, worthy sirs, as being Hans of Iceland. The dying man said to me: 'I am not Hans of Iceland; I am justly punished for having assumed his name. I was paid to play the part by the chancellor's private secretary; he is called Musdœmon; and it was he who managed the whole revolt under the name of Hacket! I believe him to be the only guilty man in this whole matter.' Then he asked me to give him my blessing, and advised me to make haste and repeat his last words to the court. God is my witness. May I save the shedding of innocent blood, and not cause that of the guilty to flow!"

He ceased, again bowing to his bishop and the judges.

"Your Grace sees," said the bishop to the president, "that one of my clients was not mistaken when he found so much resemblance between Hacket and your private secretary."

"Turiaf Musdœmon," said the president to the prisoner, "what have you to say in your defence?"

Musdœmon looked at his master with an expression which alarmed him. He had recovered his usual impudence, and after a brief pause, answered: "Nothing, sir."

The president resumed in a weak and faltering voice: "Then you acknowledge yourself guilty of the crime with which you are charged? You confess yourself to be the author of a conspiracy alike against the State and against one John Schumacker?"

"I do, my lord," replied Musdœmon.

The bishop rose. "Mr. President, that there may be no shadow of doubt in this affair, will your grace ask the prisoner if he had any accomplices?"

"Accomplices?" repeated Musdœmon.

He hesitated a moment. The president wore a look of awful anxiety.

"No, my lord Bishop," he said at last.

The president's look of relief fell full upon him.

"No, I had no accomplices," repeated Musdœmon, still more emphatically. "I concocted this plot through affection for my master, who knew nothing of it, to destroy his enemy, Schumacker."

The eyes of prisoner and president met once more.

"Your Grace," said the bishop, "must see that as Musdœmon had no accomplices, Baron Ordener Guldenlew must be innocent."

"Then why, worthy Bishop, did he confess his guilt?"

"Mr. President, why did that mountaineer persist that he was Hans of Iceland at the risk of his life? God alone knows our secret motives."

Ordener took up the word: "Judges, I can tell you my motive, now that the real criminal has been discovered. I accused myself falsely to save the former chancellor, Schumacker, whose death would would have left his daughter without a protector."

The president bit his lip.

"We request the court," said the bishop, "to proclaim the innocence of our client, Ordener Guldenlew."

The president responded with a nod; and at the request of the lord mayor, they finished their examination of the terrible casket, which contained nothing more except Schumacker's titles of nobility, and a few letters from the Munkholm prisoner to Captain Dispolsen,— bitter, but not criminal letters, which alarmed no one but Chancellor d'Ahlefeld.

The court then withdrew; and after a brief deliberation, while the curious crowd, gathered on the parade, waited with stubborn impatience to see the viceroy's son led forth to die, and the executioner nonchalantly paced the scaffold, the president pronounced in a scarcely audible voice the death sentence of Turiaf Musdœmon, the acquittal of Ordener Guldenlew, and the restoration of all his honors, titles, and privileges.

XLIX

What will you sell me your carcass for, my boy?
I would not give you, in faith, a broken toy.
Saint Michael and Satan (*Old Miracle Play*).

THE remnant of the regiment of Munkholm musketeers had returned to their old quarters in the barracks, which stood in the centre of a vast, square courtyard within the fortress. At night-fall the doors of this building were barricaded, all the soldiers withdrawing into it with the exception of the sentinels upon the various towers, and the handful of men on guard before the military prison adjoining the barracks. This, being the safest and best watched place of confinement in Munkholm, contained the two prisoners sentenced to be hanged on the following morning, Hans of Iceland and Musdœmon.

Hans of Iceland was alone in his cell. He was stretched upon the floor, chained, his head upon a stone; a feeble light filtered through a square grated opening, cut in the heavy oak door which divided his cell from the next room, where he heard his jailers laugh and swear, and heard the sound of the bottles which they drained, and the dice which they threw upon a drumhead. The monster silently writhed in the darkness, his limbs twitched convulsively, and he gnashed his teeth.

All at once he lifted his voice and called aloud. A turnkey appeared at the grating: "What do you want?" said he.

Hans of Iceland rose. "Mate, I am cold; my stone bed is hard and damp. Give me a bundle of straw to sleep on, and a little fire to warm myself."

"It is only fair," replied the turnkey, "to give a little comfort to a poor devil who is going to be hung, even if he be the Iceland Devil. I will bring you what you want. Have you any money?"

"No," replied the brigand.

"What! you, the most famous robber in Norway, and you have not a few scurvy gold ducats in your pouch?"

"No," repeated the brigand.

"A few little crowns?"

"I tell you no!"

"Not even a few paltry escalins?"

"No no, nothing; not enough to buy a rat's skin or a man's soul."

The turnkey shook his head: "That's a different matter; you have no right to complain. Your cell is not so cold as the one you will have to sleep in to-morrow, and yet I'll be bound you won't notice the hardness of that bed."

So saying, the jailer withdrew, followed by the curses of the monster, who continued to rattle his chains, which gave forth a hollow clang as if they were breaking slowly under repeated and violent jerks and pulls.

The door opened. A tall man, dressed in red serge, carrying a dark lantern, entered the cell, accompanied by the jailer who had refused the prisoner's request. The latter at once became perfectly quiet.

"Hans of Iceland," said the man in red, "I am Nychol Orugix, executioner of the province of Throndhjem; to-morrow, at sunrise, I am to have the honor of hanging your Excellency upon a fine new gallows in Throndhjem market-place."

"Are you very sure that you will hang me?" replied the brigand.

The executioner laughed. "I wish you were as sure to rise straight into heaven by Jacob's ladder as you are to mount the scaffold by Nychol Orugix's ladder."

"Indeed?" said the monster, with a malicious grin.

"I tell you again, Sir Brigand, that I am hangman for the province."

"If I were not myself I should like to be you," replied the brigand.

"I can't say the same for you," rejoined the hangman;

then rubbing his hands with a conceited and complacent smirk, he added: "My friend, you are right; ours is a fine trade. Ah! my hand knows the weight of a man's head."

"Have you often tasted blood?" asked the brigand.

"No; but I have often used the rack."

"Have you ever devoured the entrails of a living child?"

"No; but I have crushed men's bones in a vise; I have broken their limbs upon the wheel; I have dulled steel saws upon their skulls; I have torn their quivering flesh with red-hot pincers; I have burned the blood in their open veins by pouring in a stream of molten lead and boiling oil."

"Yes," said the brigand, with a thoughtful look, "you have your pleasures too."

"In fact," added the hangman, "Hans of Iceland though you be, I imagine that my hands have released more human souls than yours, to say nothing of your own, which you must render up to-morrow."

"Always provided that I have one. Do you suppose, then, executioner of Throndhjem, that you can release the spirit of Ingulf from Hans of Iceland's mortal frame without its carrying off your own?"

The executioner laughed heartily. "Indeed, we shall see to-morrow."

"We shall see," said the brigand.

"Well," said the executioner, "I did not come here to talk of your spirit, but only of your body. Hearken! your body by law belongs to me after your death; but the law gives you the right to sell it to me. Tell me what you will take for it?"

"What I will take for my corpse?" said the brigand.

"Yes, and be reasonable."

Hans of Iceland turned to his jailer: "Tell me, mate, how much do you ask for a bundle of straw and a handful of fire?"

The jailer reflected. "Two gold ducats."

"Well," said the brigand to the hangman, "you must give me two gold ducats for my corpse."

"Two gold ducats!" cried the hangman. "It is horribly dear. Two gold ducats for a wretched corpse! No, indeed! I'll give no such price."

"Then," quietly responded the monster, "you shall not have it."

"Then you will be thrown into the common sewer, instead of adorning the Royal Museum at Copenhagen or the collection of curiosities at Bergen."

"What do I care?"

"Long after your death, people will flock to look at your skeleton, saying, 'Those are the remains of the famous Hans of Iceland!' Your bones will be nicely polished, and strung on copper wire; you will be placed in a big glass case, and dusted carefully every day. Instead of these honors, consider what awaits you if you refuse to sell me your body; you will be left to rot in some charnel-house, where you will be the prey of worms and other vermin."

"Well, I shall be like the living, who are perpetually preyed upon by their inferiors and devoured by their superiors."

"Two gold ducats!" muttered the hangman; "what an exorbitant price! If you will not come down in your terms, my dear fellow, we can never make a trade."

"It is my first and probably my last trade; I am bent on having it a good one."

"Consider that I may make you repent of your obstinacy. To-morrow you will be in my power."

"Do you think so?" These words were uttered with a look which escaped the hangman.

"Yes; and there is a certain way of tightening a slip-knot — but if you will only be reasonable, I will hang you in my best manner."

"Little do I care what you do to my neck to-morrow," replied the monster, with a mocking air.

"Come, won't you be satisfied with two crowns? What can you do with the money?"

"Ask your comrade there," said the brigand, pointing to

the turnkey; "he charges me two gold ducats for a handful of straw and a fire."

"Now by Saint Joseph's saw," said the hangman, angrily addressing the turnkey; "it is shocking to make a man pay its weight in gold for a fire and a little worthless straw."

"Two ducats!" the turnkey replied sourly; "I've a good mind to make him pay four! It is you, Master Nychol, who act like a regular screw in refusing to give this poor prisoner two gold ducats for his corpse, when you can sell it for at least twenty to some learned old fogy or some doctor."

"I never paid more than twenty escalins for a corpse in my life," said the hangman.

"Yes," replied the jailer, "for the body of some paltry thief, or some miserable Jew, that may be; but everybody knows that you can get whatever you choose to ask for Hans of Iceland's body."

Hans of Iceland shook his head.

"What business is it of yours?" said Orugix, curtly, "do I interfere with your plunder,— with the clothes and jewels that you steal from the prisoners, and the dirty water which you pour into their thin soup, and the torture to which you put them, to extort money from them? No, I never will give two gold ducats."

"No straw and no fire for less than two gold ducats," replied the obstinate jailer.

"No corpse for less than two gold ducats," repeated the unmoved brigand.

The hangman, after a brief pause, stamped his foot angrily, saying: "Well, I've no time to waste with you. I am wanted elsewhere." He drew from his waiscoat a leather bag, which he opened slowly and reluctantly. "There, cursed demon of Iceland, there are your two ducats. Satan would never give you as much for your soul as I do for your body, I am sure."

The brigand accepted the gold. The turnkey instantly held out his hand to take it.

"One instant, mate; first give me what I asked for."

The jailer went out, and soon returned with a bundle of dry straw and a pan of live coals, which he placed beside the prisoner.

"That's it," said the brigand, giving him the two ducats; "I'll make a warm night of it. One word more," he added in an ominous tone. "Does not this prison adjoin the barracks of the Munkholm musketeers?"

"It does," said the jailer.

"And which way is the wind?"

"From the east, I think."

"Good," said the brigand.

"What are you aiming at, comrade?" asked the jailer.

"Oh, nothing," replied the brigand.

"Farewell, comrade, until to-morrow morning early."

"Yes, to-morrow," repeated the brigand.

And the noise of the heavy door as it closed, prevented the jailer and his companion from hearing the fierce, jeering laughter which accompanied these words.

L

Do you hope to end with another crime? — ALEX. SOUMET.

LET us now take a look at the other cell in the military prison adjoining the barracks, which holds our old acquaintance, Turiaf Musdœmon.

It may seem surprising that Musdœmon, crafty and cowardly as he was, should so readily confess his crime to the court which condemned him, and so generously conceal the share of his ungrateful master, Chancellor d'Ahlefeld, in it.

However, Musdœmon had not experienced a change of heart. His noble frankness was perhaps the greatest proof of cunning which he could possibly have given. When he saw his infernal intrigues so unexpectedly exposed, beyond

all hope of denial, he was for an instant stunned and terrified. Conquering his alarm, his extreme shrewdness soon showed him that as it was impossible to destroy his chosen victims, he must bend all his energies to saving himself. Two plans at once presented themselves: the first, to throw all the blame upon Count d'Ahlefeld, who had so basely deserted him; the second, to assume the whole burden of the crime himself. A vulgar mind would have grasped at the former; Musdœmon chose the latter. The chancellor was chancellor after all; besides there was nothing in the papers which directly implicated him, although they contained overwhelming evidence against his secretary. Then, his master had given him several meaning looks; this was enough to confirm him in his purpose to suffer himself to be condemned, confident that Count d'Ahlefeld would connive at his escape, though less from gratitude for past service than through his need for future aid.

He therefore paced his prison, which was dimly lighted by a wretched lamp, never doubting that the door would be thrown open during the night. He studied the architecture of the old stone cell, built by kings whose very names have almost vanished from the pages of history, and was much surprised to find a wooden plank, which echoed back his tread as if it covered some subterranean vault. He also observed a huge iron ring cemented into the arched roof, from which hung a fragment of rope. Time passed; and he listened impatiently to the clock on the tower as it slowly struck the hours, its mournful toll resounding through the silence of the night.

At last there was a footfall outside his cell; his heart beat high with hope. The massive bolt creaked; the padlock dropped; and as the door opened, his face beamed with delight. It was the same character in scarlet robes whom we have just encountered in Hans of Iceland's prison. He had a coil of hempen cord under his arm, and was accompanied by four halberdiers in black, armed with swords and partisans.

Musdœmon still wore the wig and gown of a magistrate. His dress seemed to impress the man in red, who bowed low as if accustomed to respect that garb, and said with some hesitation: "Sir, is our business with your worship?"

"Yes, yes," hastily replied Musdœmon, confirmed in his hope of escape by this polite address, and failing to observe the bloody hue of the speaker's garments.

"Your name," said the man, his eyes fixed on a parchment which he had just unrolled, "is Turiaf Musdœmon, I believe."

"Just so. Do you come from the chancellor, my friend?"

"Yes, your worship."

"Do not fail, when you have done your errand, to assure his Grace of my undying gratitude."

The man in red looked at him in amazement. "Your — gratitude!"

"Yes, to be sure, my friend; for it will probably be out of my power to thank him in person very soon."

"Probably," dryly replied the man.

"And you must feel," added Musdœmon, "that I owe him a deep debt of gratitude for such a service."

"By the cross of the repentant thief," cried the man, with a coarse laugh, "to hear you, one would think that the chancellor was doing something quite unusual for you!"

"Well, to be sure, it is no more than strict justice."

"Strict justice! that is the word; but you acknowledge that it is justice. It is the first admission of the kind that I ever heard in the six-and-twenty years that I have followed my profession. Come, sir, we waste our time in idle talk; are you ready?"

"I am," said the delighted Musdœmon, stepping to the door.

"Wait; wait a minute," exclaimed the man in red, stooping to lay his coil of rope on the floor.

Musdœmon paused.

"What are you going to do with all that rope?"

"Your worship may well ask. I know that there is much more than I shall need; but when I began on this affair I thought there would be a great many more prisoners."

"Come, make haste!" said Musdœmon.

"Your worship is in a wonderful hurry. Have you no last favor to ask?"

"None but the one I have already mentioned, that you will thank his Grace for me. For God's sake, make haste!" added Musdœmon; "I long to get away from here. Have we a long journey before us?"

"A long journey!" replied the man in red, straightening himself, and measuring off a few lengths of rope. "The journey will not tire your worship much; for we can make it without leaving this room."

Musdœmon shuddered.

"What do you mean?"

"What do you mean yourself?" asked the man.

"Oh, God!" said Musdœmon, turning pale, "who are you?"

"I am the hangman."

The poor wretch trembled like a dry leaf blown by the wind.

"Did you not come to help me to escape?" he feebly muttered.

The hangman laughed. "Yes, truly! to help you to escape into the spirit-land, whence I warrant you will not be brought back."

Musdœmon grovelled on the floor. "Mercy! Have pity on me! Mercy!"

"I' faith," coldly observed the hangman, "'tis the first time I was ever asked such a thing. Do you take me for the king?"

The unfortunate man dragged himself on his knees, trailing his gown in the dust, beating his head against the floor, and clasping the hangman's feet with muffled groans and broken sobs.

"Come, be quiet!" said the hangman. "I never before

saw a black gown kneel to a red jerkin." He kicked the suppliant aside, adding: "Pray to God and the saints, fellow; they will be more apt to hear you than I."

Musdœmon still knelt, his face buried in his hands, weeping bitterly.

Meantime, the hangman, standing on tiptoe, passed his rope through the ring in the ceiling: he let it hang until it reached the floor, then secured it by a double turn, and made a slip-knot in the end.

"I am ready," said he, when these ominous preparations were over; "are you ready to lay down your life?"

"No!" said Musdœmon, springing up; "no, it cannot be! There is some horrible mistake. Chancellor d'Ahlefeld is not so base; I am too necessary to him. It is impossible that it was for me he sent you. Let me escape; do not fear that the chancellor will be angry."

"Did you not say," replied the executioner, "that you were Turiaf Musdœmon?"

The prisoner hesitated for an instant, then said suddenly: "No, no! my name is not Musdœmon; my name is Turiaf Orugix."

"Orugix!" cried the executioner, "Orugix!"

He snatched off the periwig which concealed the prisoner's face, and uttered an exclamation of surprise: "My brother!"

"Your brother!" replied the prisoner, with a mixture of shame and pleasure; "can you be—"

"Nychol Orugix, hangman for the province of Throndhjem, at your service, brother Turiaf."

The prisoner fell upon the executioner's neck, calling him his brother, his beloved brother. This fraternal recognition would not have gratified any one who witnessed it. Turiaf lavished countless caresses upon Nychol with a forced and timid smile, while Nychol responded with a gloomy and embarrassed look. It was like a tiger fondling an elephant, while the monster's ponderous foot is already planted upon its panting chest.

"What happiness, brother Nychol! I am glad indeed to see you."

"And I am sorry for you, brother Turiaf."

The prisoner pretended not to hear these words, and went on in trembling tones: "You have a wife and children, I suppose? You must take me to see my gentle sister, and let me kiss my dear nephews."

"The Devil fly away with you!" muttered the hangman.

"I will be a second father to them. Hark ye, brother, I am powerful; I have great influence —"

The brother replied with a sinister expression: "I know that you had! At present, you had better be thinking of that which you have doubtless contrived to curry with the saints."

All hope faded from the prisoner's face.

"Good God! what does this mean, dear Nychol? I am safe, since I have found you. Think that the same mother bore us; that we played together as children. Remember, Nychol, you are my brother!"

"You never remembered it until now," replied the brutal Nychol.

"No, I cannot die by my brother's hand!"

"It is your own fault, Turiaf. It was you who ruined my career; who prevented me from becoming royal executioner at Copenhagen; who caused me to be sent into this miserable region as a petty provincial hangman. If you had not been a bad brother, you would have no cause to complain of that which distresses you so much now. I should not be in Throndhjem, and some one else would have to finish your business. Now, enough, brother, you must die."

Death is hideous to the wicked for the same reason that it is beautiful to the good; both must put off their humanity, but the just man is delivered from his body as from a prison, while the wicked man is torn from it as from a jail. At the last moment hell yawns before the sinful soul which has

dreamed of annihilation. It knocks anxiously at the dark portals of death; and it is not annihilation that answers.

The prisoner rolled upon the floor and wrung his hands, with moans more heart-rending than the everlasting wail of the damned.

"God have mercy! Holy angels in heaven, if you exist, have pity upon me! Nychol, brother Nychol, in our mother's name, oh, let me live!"

The hangman held out his warrant.

"I cannot; the order is peremptory."

"That warrant is not for me," stammered the despairing prisoner; "it is for one Musdœmon. That is not I; I am Turiaf Orugix."

"You jest," said Nychol, shrugging his shoulders. "I know perfectly well that it is meant for you. Besides," he added roughly, "yesterday you would not have been Turiaf Orugix to your brother; to-day he can only look upon you as Turiaf Musdœmon."

"Brother, brother!" groaned the wretch, "only wait until to-morrow! It is impossible that the chancellor could have given the order for my death; it is some frightful mistake. Count d'Ahlefeld loves me dearly. Dear Nychol, I implore you, spare my life! I shall soon be restored to favor, and I will do whatever you may ask —"

"You can do me but one service, Turiaf," broke in the hangman. "I have lost two executions already upon which I counted the most, those of ex-chancellor Schumacker and the viceroy's son. I am always unlucky. You and Hans of Iceland are all that are left. Your execution, being secret and by night, is worth at least twelve gold ducats to me. Let me hang you peaceably, that is the only favor I ask of you."

"Oh, God!" sighed the prisoner.

"It will be the first and last, in good sooth; but, in return, I promise that you shall not suffer. I will hang you like a brother; submit to your fate."

Musdœmon sprang to his feet; his nostrils were distended

with rage; his livid lips quivered; his teeth chattered; his mouth foamed with despair.

"Satan! I saved that d'Ahlefeld; I have embraced my brother,— and they murder me! And I must die this very night in a dark dungeon, where none can hear my curses; where I may not cry out against them from one end of the kingdom to the other; where I may not tear asunder the veil that hides their crimes! Was it for such a death that I have stained my entire life? Wretch!" he added, turning to his brother, "would you become a fratricide?"

"I am the executioner," answered the phlegmatic Nychol.

"No!" exclaimed the prisoner; and he flung himself headlong upon the executioner, his eyes darting flame and streaming with tears, like those of a bull at bay,—"no, I will not die thus meekly; I have not lived like a poisonous serpent to die like a paltry worm trampled under foot! I will leave my life in my last sting; but it shall be mortal."

So saying he grappled like a bitter foe with him whom he had just embraced as a brother; the fulsome, flattering Musdœmon now showed his true spirit. Despair stirred up the foul dregs of his soul; and after crawling prostrate like a tiger, like a tiger he sprang upon his enemy. It would have been hard to decide which of the two brothers was the most appalling, as they struggled, one with the brute ferocity of a wild beast, the other with the artful fury of a demon.

But the four halberdiers, hitherto passive spectators, did not remain motionless. They lent their aid to the executioner; and soon Musdœmon, whose rage was his only strength, was forced to quit his hold. He dashed himself against the wall, uttering inarticulate yells, and blunting his nails upon the stone.

"To die! Devils in hell, to die! My shrieks unheard outside this roof, my arms powerless to tear down these walls!"

He was seized, but offered no resistance; his useless efforts had exhausted him. He was stripped of his gown, and bound; at this moment a sealed packet fell from his bosom.

"What is that?" said the hangman.

An infernal light gleamed in the prisoner's haggard eyes. He muttered: "How could I forget that? Look here, brother Nychol," he added in an almost friendly tone; "these papers belong to the lord chancellor. Promise to give them to him, and you may do what you will with me."

"Since you are quiet now, I promise to grant your last wish, although you have been a bad brother to me. I will see that the chancellor has the papers, on the honor of an Orugix."

"Ask leave to hand them to him yourself," replied the prisoner, smiling at the executioner, who, from his nature, had little understanding of smiles. "The pleasure which they will afford his Grace may lead him to confer some favor on you."

"Really, brother?" said Orugix. "Thank you! Perhaps he will make me executioner royal after all, eh? Well, let us part good friends! I forgive you all the scratches which you gave me; forgive me for the hempen collar which I must give you."

"The chancellor promised me a very different sort of collar," said Musdœmon.

Then the halberdiers led him, bound, into the middle of the cell; the hangman placed the fatal noose round his neck.

"Are you ready, Turiaf?"

"One moment! one moment!" said the prisoner, whose terror had revived; "for mercy's sake, brother, do not pull the rope until I tell you to do so!"

"I do not need to pull it," answered the hangman.

A moment later he repeated his question. "Are you ready?"

"One moment more! Alas! must I die?"

"Turiaf, I have no time to waste."

So saying, Orugix signed to the halberdiers to stand away from the prisoner.

"One word more, brother; do not forget to give the packet to Count d'Ahlefeld."

"Never fear," replied Nychol. He added for the third time: "Come, are you ready?"

The unfortunate man opened his lips, perhaps to plead for another brief delay, when the impatient hangman stooped and turned a brass button projecting from the floor.

The plank gave way beneath the victim; the poor wretch disappeared through a square trap-door with a dull twang from the rope, which was stretched suddenly and vibrated fearfully with the dying man's final convulsions.

Nothing was seen but the rope swinging to and fro in the dark opening, through which came a cool breeze and a sound as of running water.

The halberdiers themselves shrank back horror-stricken. The hangman approached the abyss, seized the rope, which still vibrated, and swung himself into the hole, pressing both feet against his victim's shoulders; the fatal rope stretched to its utmost with a creak, and stood still. A stifled sob rose from the trap.

"All is over," said the hangman, climbing back into the cell. "Farewell, brother!"

He drew a cutlass from his belt. "Go feed the fishes in the fjord. Your body to the waves; your soul to the flames!"

With these words, he cut the taut rope. The fragment still fastened to the iron ring lashed the ceiling, while the deep, dark waters splashed high as the body fell, then swept on their underground course.

The hangman closed the trap as he had opened it; as he rose, he saw that the room was full of smoke.

"What is all this?" he asked the halberdiers. "Where does this smoke come from?"

They knew no better than he. In surprise, they opened the door; the corridors were also filled with thick and nauseating smoke. A secret outlet led them, greatly terrified, to the square courtyard, where a fearful sight met their gaze.

A vast conflagration, fanned by a violent east wind, was

consuming the military prison and the barracks. The flames, driven in eddying whirls, climbed stone walls, crowned burning roofs, leaped from gaping window-frames; and the black towers of Munkholm now shone in a red and ominous light, now vanished in a dense cloud of smoke.

A turnkey who was escaping by the courtyard, told them hastily that the fire had broken out in the monster's cell during the sleep of Hans of Iceland's keepers, he having been imprudently allowed to have a fire and straw.

"How unlucky I am!" cried Orugix, when he heard this story; "now I suppose Hans of Iceland has slipped through my hands too. The rascal must have been burned; and I sha'n't even get his body, for which I paid two ducats!"

Meantime, the unfortunate Munkholm musketeers, roused suddenly from their sleep by imminent death, crowded toward the door only to find it closely barred. Their shrieks of anguish and despair were heard outside; they stood at the blazing windows, wringing their hands, or dashed themselves madly upon the flagging of the court, escaping one death to meet another. The victorious flames devoured the entire structure before the rest of the garrison could come to the rescue.

All help was vain. Luckily, the building stood by itself. The door was broken in with hatchets, but it was too late; for as it opened, the burning roof and floors gave way, and fell upon the unfortunate men with a loud crash.

The entire building disappeared in a whirlwind of fiery dust and burning smoke, which stifled the faint moans of the expiring men.

Next morning nothing was left in the courtyard but four high walls, black and smoking, around a horrid mass of smouldering ruins still devouring each other like wild beasts in a circus.

When the pile had cooled, it was searched. Beneath a heap of stones and iron beams, twisted out of shape by the flames, was found a mass of whitened bones and disfigured corpses; with some thirty soldiers, most of whom were crip-

pled, this was all that remained of the crack regiment of Munkholm.

When the site of the prison was searched, and they reached the fatal cell where the fire had broken out, and where Hans of Iceland had been imprisoned, they found the remains of a human body close beside an iron pan and a heap of broken chains. It was curious that among these ashes there were two skulls, although there was but one skeleton.

LI

Saladin. Bravo, Ibrahim! you are indeed the messenger of good fortune; I thank you for your joyful tidings.
The Mameluke. Well, is that all?
Saladin. What did you expect?
The Mameluke. Nothing more for the messenger of good fortune.
LESSING: *Nathan the Wise.*

PALE and worn, Count d'Ahlefeld strode up and down his apartment; in his hand he crushed a bundle of letters which he had just read, while he stamped his foot on the smooth marble floor and the gold-fringed rugs.

At the other end of the room, in an attitude of deep respect, stood Nychol Orugix in his infamous scarlet dress, felt hat in hand.

"You have done me good service, Musdœmon," hissed the chancellor.

The hangman looked up timidly: "Is your Grace pleased?"

"What do you want here?" said the chancellor, turning upon him suddenly.

The hangman, proud that he had won a glance from the chancellor, smiled hopefully.

"What do I want, your Grace? The post of executioner at Copenhagen, if your Grace will deign to bestow so great a favor on me in return for the good news I have brought you."

The chancellor called to the two halberdiers on guard at his door: "Seize this rascal; he annoys me by his impudence."

The guards led away the amazed and confounded Nychol, who ventured one word more: "My lord —"

"You are no longer hangman for the province of Throndhjem; I deprive you of your office!" cried the chancellor, slamming the door.

The chancellor returned to his letters, angrily read and re-read them, maddened by his dishonor; for these were the letters which once passed between the countess and Musdœmon. This was Elphega's handwriting. He found that Ulrica was not his daughter; that, it might be, the Frederic whom he mourned was not his son. The unhappy count was punished through that same pride which had caused all his crimes. He cared not now if vengeance evaded him; all his ambitious dreams vanished,— his past was blasted, his future dead. He had striven to destroy his enemies; he had only succeeded in losing his own reputation, his adviser, and even his marital and paternal rights.

But he must see once more the wretched woman who had betrayed him. He hastily crossed the spacious apartment, shaking the letters in his hand as if they were a thunderbolt. He threw open the door of Elphega's room; he entered —

The guilty wife had just unexpectedly learned from Colonel Vœthaün of her son Frederic's fearful death. The poor mother was insane.

CONCLUSION

What I said in jest, you took seriously.— *Old Spanish Romance* (*King Alfonso to Bernard*).

FOR a fortnight the events which we have just related formed the sole topic of conversation in the town and province of Throndhjem, judged from the various standpoints of the various speakers. The people of the town, who had waited in vain to see seven successive executions, began to despair of ever having that pleasure; and purblind old women declared that, on the night of the lamentable fire at the barracks, they had seen Hans of Iceland fly up in the flames, laughing amid the blaze, as he dashed the burning roof of the building upon the Munkholm musketeers; when, after an absence which to his Ethel seemed an age, Ordener returned to the Lion of Schleswig tower, accompanied by General Levin de Knud and Chaplain Athanasius Munder.

Schumacker was walking in the garden, leaning on his daughter. The young couple found it hard not to rush into each other's arms; but they were forced to be content with a look. Schumacker affectionately grasped Ordener's hand, and greeted the two strangers in a friendly manner.

"Young man," said the aged captive, "may Heaven bless your return!"

"Sir," replied Ordener, "I have just arrived. Having seen my father at Bergen, I would now embrace my father at Munkholm."

"What do you mean?" asked the old man, in great surprise.

"That you must give me your daughter, noble sir."

"My daughter!" exclaimed the prisoner, turning to the confused and blushing Ethel.

"Yes, my lord, I love your Ethel. I have devoted my life to her; she is mine."

Schumacker's face clouded: "You are a brave and noble youth, my son. Although your father has done me much harm, I forgive him for your sake; and I should be glad to sanction this marriage. But there is an obstacle —"

"What is it, sir?" asked Ordener, anxiously.

"You love my daughter; but are you sure that she loves you?"

The two lovers cast at each other a rapid glance of mute amazement.

"Yes," continued the father. "I am sorry; for I love you, and would gladly call you son. But my daughter would never consent. She has recently confessed her aversion for you, and since your departure she is silent whenever I speak of you, and seems to avoid all thought of you as if you were odious to her. You must give up your love for her, Ordener. Never fear; love may be cured as well as hatred."

"My lord!" exclaimed the astonished Ordener.

"Father!" cried Ethel, clasping her hands.

"Do not be alarmed, my daughter," interrupted the old man; "I approve of this marriage, but you do not. I will never force your inclinations, Ethel. This last fortnight has wrought a great change in me; you are free to choose for yourself."

Athanasius Munder smiled. "She is not," he said.

"You are mistaken, dear father," added Ethel, taking courage; "I do not hate Ordener."

"What!" cried her father.

"I am —" resumed Ethel. She hesitated.

Ordener knelt at the old man's feet.

"She is my wife, father! Forgive me as my other father has forgiven me, and bless your children."

Schumacker, surprised in his turn, blessed the young couple.

"I have cursed so many people in my lifetime," said he, "that I now seize every opportunity for blessing. But explain."

All was made clear to him. He wept with emotion, gratitude, and love.

"I thought myself wise; I am old, and I did not understand the heart of a young girl!"

"And so I am Mrs. Ordener Guldenlew!" said Ethel, with child-like delight.

"Ordener Guldenlew," rejoined old Schumacker, "you are a better man than I; for in the day of my prosperity I would never have stooped to wed the penniless and disgraced daughter of an unfortunate prisoner."

The general took the old man's hand, and offered him a roll of parchment, saying: "Do not speak thus, Count. Here are your titles, which the king long since sent you by Dispolsen; his Majesty now adds a free pardon. Such is the dowry of your daughter, Countess Danneskiold."

"Pardon! freedom!" repeated the enraptured Ethel.

"Countess Danneskiold!" added her father.

"Yes, Count," continued the general; "your honors and estates are restored."

"To whom do I owe all this?" asked the happy Schumacker.

"To General Levin de Knud," answered Ordener.

"Levin de Knud! Did I not tell you, Governor, that Levin de Knud was the best of men? But why did he not bring me the good news himself? Where is he?"

Ordener pointed in surprise to the smiling, weeping general: "Here!"

The recognition of the two who had been comrades in the days of their youth and power was a touching one. Schumacker's heart swelled. His acquaintance with Hans had destroyed his hatred of men; his acquaintance with Ordener and Levin taught him to love them.

The gloomy wedding in the cell was soon celebrated by brilliant festivities. Life smiled upon the young couple who had smiled at death. Count d'Ahlefeld saw that they were happy; this was his most cruel punishment.

Athanasius Munder shared their joy. He obtained the

pardon of his twelve convicts, and Ordener added that of his former companions in misfortune, Jonas and Norbith, who returned, free and happy, to inform the appeased miners that the king released them from the protectorate.

Schumacker did not long enjoy the union of Ethel and Ordener. Liberty and happiness were too much for him; he went to enjoy a different happiness and a different freedom. He died that same year, 1699, his children accepting this blow as a warning that there is no perfect bliss in this world. He was buried in Veer Church, upon an estate in Jutland belonging to his son-in-law, and his tomb preserves all the titles of which captivity deprived him. From the marriage of Ordener and Ethel sprang the race of the counts of Danneskiold.

THE END.

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